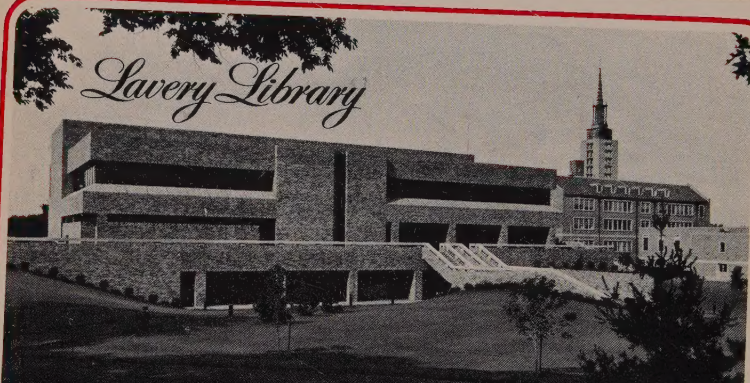


A HEBREW  
ANTHOLOGY

KOHUT

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# A HEBREW ANTHOLOGY

A COLLECTION OF POEMS AND DRAMAS INSPIRED BY THE OLD TESTAMENT  
AND POST BIBLICAL TRADITION GATHERED FROM WRITINGS OF  
ENGLISH POETS, FROM THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD AND  
EARLIER TO THE PRESENT DAY.

EDITED BY  
GEORGE ALEXANDER KOHUT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

HUDSON MAXIM

*Author of "The Science of Poetry"*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

SELECTIONS FROM THE DRAMA.

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VOL. 2

1913  
S. BACHARACH  
CINCINNATI  
U. S. A.

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FEBRUARY, 1913.

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# LUCIFER





# LUCIFER

[EXTRACT.]

[*The scene of the drama is laid throughout in heaven. The actors are the angels. Lucifer has sent Apollyon to Eden to view the new-made man and woman and to inquire into their state. Apollyon thus describes Eve.*]

Search all our angel bands, in beauty  
well arrayed,  
They will but monsters seem, by the  
dawn-light of a maid.

BEELZEBUB—

It seems you burn in love for this  
new womankind!

APOLLYON—

My great wing-feather in that amorous  
flame, I find  
I've singed! 'Twas hard indeed to soar  
up from below,  
To sweep, and reach the verge of  
Angel-borough so;  
I parted, but with pain, and three times  
looked around;  
There shines no seraph form in all the  
ethereal bound  
Like hers, whose hanging hair, in gold-  
en glory, seems  
To rush down from her head in a tor-  
rent of sunbeams,  
And flow along her back. So clad in  
light and grace,  
Stately she treads, and charms the day-  
light with her face;  
Let pearls and mother o' pearl their  
claims before her furl,  
Her brightness passes far the beauty  
of a pearl!

BEELZEBUB—

But what can profit man this beauty  
that must fade  
And wither like a flower, and shortly  
be decayed?

(*Lucifer's jealousy of the new race being aroused, he thus addresses his attendant angels:*)

Swift spirits, let us stay the chariot of  
the dawn;  
For high enough, in sooth, God's morn-  
ing star is drawn,—  
Yea, driven up high enough! 'Tis time  
for my great car  
To yield before the advent of this  
double star,  
That rises from below, and seeks, in  
sudden birth,  
To tarnish heaven's gold with splendor  
from the earth!  
Embroider no more crowns on Luci-  
fer's attire,  
And gild his forehead not with emi-  
nent dawn-fire  
Of the morning star enrayed, that rapt  
archangels prize;  
For see another blaze in the light of  
God arise!  
The stars grow faint before the eyes  
of men below;  
'Tis night with angels, and the heav-  
ens forget to glow.

(*The loyal angels, perceiving that a  
change has come over a number of  
their order, inquire into its cause.*)

Why seem the courteous angel-faces  
So red? Why streams the holy light  
So red upon our sight,  
Through clouds and mists from mourn-  
ful places?  
What vapor dares to blear  
The pure, unspotted, clear  
And luminous sapphire?  
The flame, the blaze, the fire  
Of the bright Omnipotence?  
Why does the splendid light of God  
Glow, deepened to the hue of blood,  
That late, in flowing hence,  
Gladdened all hearts?

## THE CHORUS ANSWERS—

When we, enkindled and uplifted  
 By Gabriel's trumpet, in new ways  
 Began to chant God's praise,  
 The perfume of rose-gardens drifted  
 Through paths of Paradise,  
 And such a dew and such a spice  
 Distilled, that all the flowery grass  
 Rejoiced. But Envy soon, alas!  
 From the underworld came sneaking.  
 A mighty crowd of spirits, pale  
 And dumb and wan, came, tale on tale,  
 Displeased, some new thing seeking;  
 With brows that crushed each scowling eye,  
 And happy foreheads bent and wrinkled;  
 The doves of heaven, here on high,  
 Whose innocent pinions sweetly twinkled,  
 Are struck with mourning, one and all,  
 As though the heavens were far too small  
 For them, now Adam's been elected,  
 And such a crown for man selected.  
 This blemish blinds the light of grace,  
 And dulls the flaming of God's face.

*(Beelzebub, feigning submission to Deity, thus addresses the rebel angels.)*

Oh, cease from wailing; rend your  
 badges and your robes  
 No longer without cause, but make  
 your faces bright,  
 And let your foreheads flash, O children  
 of the light!  
 The shrill, sweet throats, that thank  
 the Deity with song,  
 Behold, and be ashamed that ye have  
 mixed so long  
 Discords and bastard tones with music  
 so divine.

*(They appeal from him to Lucifer.)*

Forbid it, Lucifer, nor suffer that our  
 ranks  
 Be mortified so low and sink without  
 a crime,  
 While man, above us raised, may flash  
 and beam sublime  
 In the very core of light, from which  
 we seraphim

Pass quivering, full of pain, and fade  
 like shadows dim.  
 We swear, by force, beneath thy glorious  
 flag combined,  
 To set thee on the throne for Adam  
 late designed!  
 We swear, with one accord, to stay  
 thine arm forever;  
 Lift high thy battle-axe! our wounded  
 rights deliver!

*(Gabriel relates to Michael the effect which the knowledge of the rebellion produced at the throne of God himself.)*

I saw God's very gladness with a cloud  
 of woe  
 O'ershadowed; and there burst a flame  
 out of the gloom  
 That pierced the eye of light, and hung,  
 a brand of doom,  
 Ready to fall in rage. I heard the  
 mighty cause  
 Where Mercy pleaded long with God's  
 all-righteous laws;  
 Grace, smoothly wise and meek, with  
 Justice arguing well.  
 I saw the cherubim, who on their faces  
 fell,  
 And cried out, "Mercy, mercy! God, let  
 Justice rest!"  
 But even as that shrill sound to His  
 great footstool pressed,  
 And God seemed almost moved to pardon  
 and to smile,  
 Up curled the odious smoke of incense  
 harsh and vile,  
 Burned down below in praise of Lucifer,  
 who rode  
 With censers and bassoons and many  
 a choral ode;  
 The heaven withdrew its face from  
 such impieties,  
 Curséd of God and spirits and all the  
 hierarchies.

*(The rebel angels form themselves into an army. They fight against Michael and his host and are conquered. The victorious angels sing.)*

Blest be the hero's hour,  
 Who smote the godless power,  
 And his might, and his light, and  
 his standard,

Down toppling like a tower;  
His crown was near God's own,  
But from his lofty throne,

With his might into night he hath  
vanished;

God's name must shine alone.

Outblazed the uproar fell,

When valorous Michaél

With the brand in his hand quenched  
the passion

Of spirits that dared rebel.

He holds God's banner now;

With laurels crown his brow!

Peace shall reign here again, and her  
forehead

Shall vanquished Discord bow.

Amid the conquering throng

Praises to God belong;

Honor bring to the King of all king-  
doms;

He gives us stuff for song.

*(After this, Gabriel enters, bearing  
the tidings of man's fall.)*

GABRIEL—

Alas! alas! alas! to adverse fortune  
bow!

What do ye here? In vain are songs  
of triumph now;

In vain of spoil of arms and gonfalons  
ye boast!

MICHAEL—

What hear I, Gabriel?

GABRIEL—

Oh, Adam is fallen and lost!  
The father and the stock of all the  
human race

Most grievously hath erred, and lies  
in piteous case.

*(Michael sends Uriel to drive the  
guilty pair out of Eden, and then thus  
pronounces the doom of the rebel an-  
gels.)*

Ozias, to whose first the very Godhead  
gave

The heavy hammer framed of diamond  
beaten out,

And chains of ruby, clamps, and teeth  
of metal stout,—

Go hence, and take and bind the hellish  
host that rage,

Lion and dragon fell, whose banners  
dared to wage

War with us thus. Speed swift on  
their accurséd flight,

And bind them neck and claw, and fet-  
ter them with might.

The key which to the gates of their  
foul pit was fitted

Is, Azarias, now into thy care com-  
mitted;

Go hence, and thrust therein all that  
our power defied.

Maceda, take this torch I to your zeal  
confide,

And flame the sulphur-pool in the cen-  
ter of the world:

There torture Lucifer, and leave his  
body curled

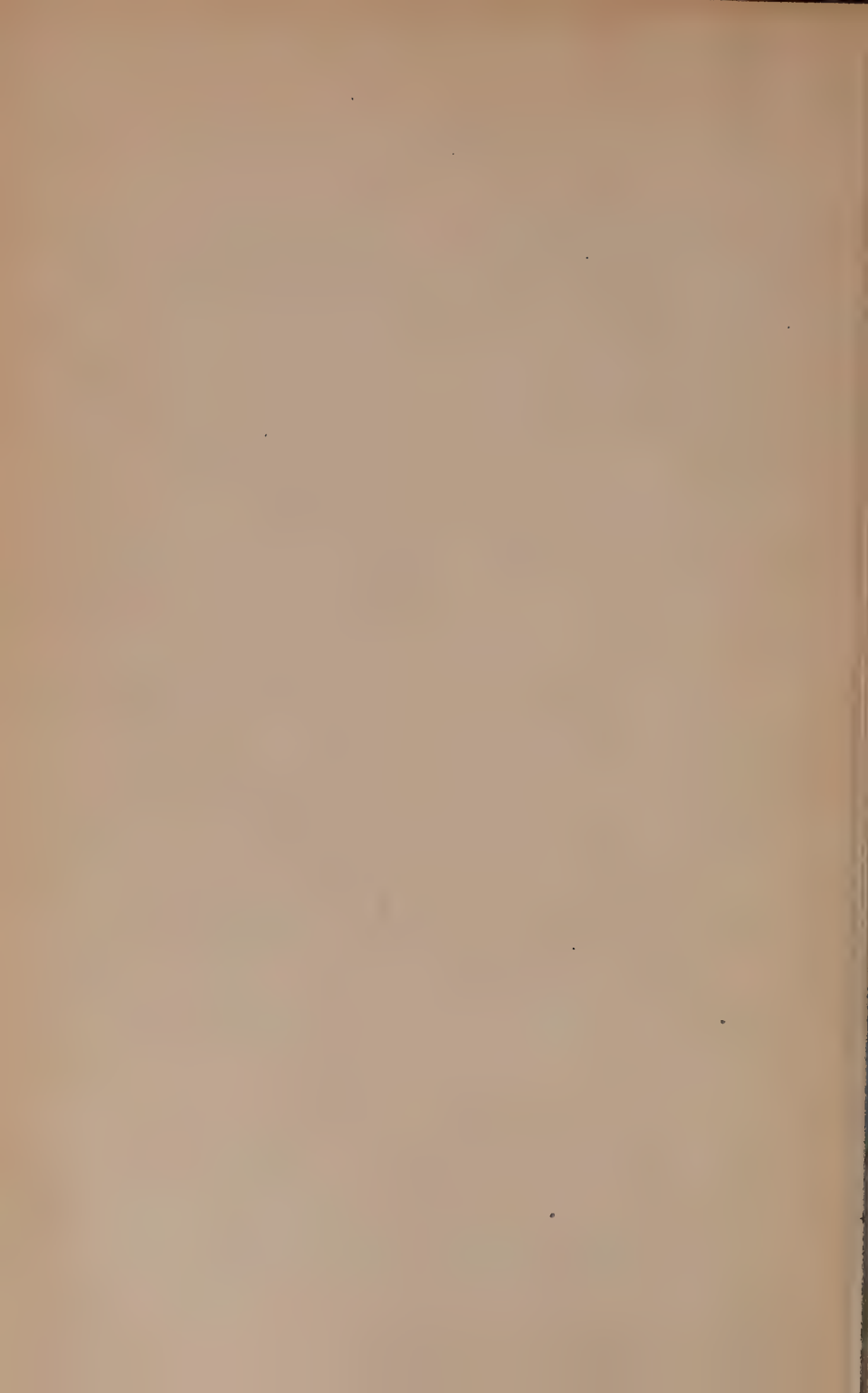
In everlasting fire, with many a prince  
accurséd;

While that of knowledge, by my  
Horror, Hunger, Thirst,

Despair without a hope, and Conscience  
with her sting,

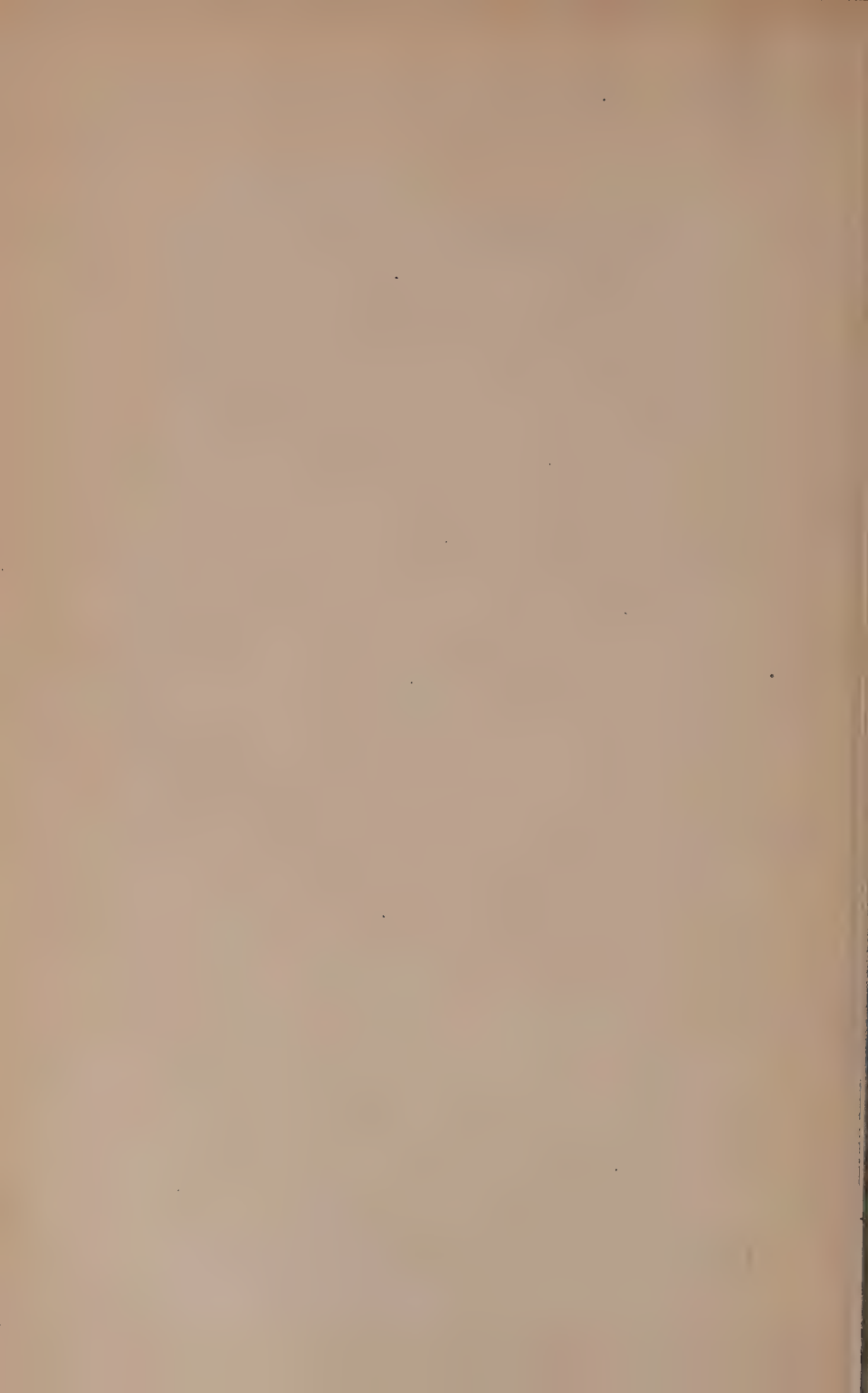
May measure out their meed of endless  
suffering.

JOOST VAN DER VONDEL (1587-1679).





## CAIN



## CAIN: A MYSTERY

"Now the Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."—Gen. iii, 1.

### PREFACE.

The following scenes are entitled, "*A Mystery*," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "*Mysteries, or Moralities*." The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual Scripture, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the serpent;" and that only because he was "the most subtle of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson, upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him, as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, "Behold the Book!"—holding up the Scripture. It is to be recollected that my present subject has nothing to do with the New Testament, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty, I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's *Death of Abel* I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection

is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza; in the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis; they were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same expression, I know nothing, and care as little.

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect) that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament. For a reason for this extraordinary omission, he may consult Warburton's *Divine Legation*: whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him without the bounds of spiritual politeness.

If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to anything of the kind, but merely to the Serpent, in his serpentine capacity.

Note.—The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but

rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc., etc., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add that there is a "tragedy" of Alfieri, called *Abele*.—I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his *Life*.

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

MEN.

ADAM.

CAIN.

ABEL.

SPIRITS.

ANGEL OF THE LORD.

LUCIFER.

WOMEN.

EVE.

ADAH.

ZILLAH.

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Land without Paradise.—Time, Sunrise.*

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH,  
offering a sacrifice.

ADAM. God, the Eternal! Infinite!  
All-wise!—

Who out of darkness on the deep didst  
make

Light on the waters with a word—all  
hail

Jehovah, with returning light, all hail!

EVE. God! who didst name the day  
and separate

Morning from night, till then divided  
never—

Who didst divide the wave from wave,  
and call

Part of Thy work the firmament—all  
hail!

ABEL. God! who didst call the ele-  
ments into

Earth—ocean—air—and fire, and with  
the day

And night, and worlds which these illu-  
minate,

Or shade, madest beings to enjoy  
them,

And love both them and Thee—all hail!  
all hail!

ADAH. God, the Eternal! Parent of  
all things!

Who didst create these best and beaute-  
ous beings,

To be beloved, more than all, save  
Thee—

Let me love Thee and them:—All hail!  
all hail!

ZILLAH. O God! who loving, making,  
blessing all,

Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in,  
And drive my father forth from Para-  
dise,

Keep us from further evil:—Hail! all  
hail!

ADAM. Son Cain, my first-born, where-  
fore art thou silent?

CAIN. Why should I speak?

ADAM. To pray.

CAIN. Have ye not prayed?

ADAM. We have, most fervently.

CAIN. And loudly: I

have heard you.

ADAM. So will God, I trust.

ABEL. Amen!

ADAM. But thou, my eldest born, art  
silent still.

CAIN. 'Tis better I should be so.

ADAM. Wherefore so?

CAIN. I have nought to ask.

ADAM. Nor aught to thank for?

CAIN. No.

ADAM. Dost thou not live?

CAIN. Must I not die?

EVE. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins

To fall.

ADAM. And we must gather it again.

O God! why didst Thou plant the tree  
of knowledge?

CAIN. And wherefore pluck'd ye not  
the tree of life?

Ye might have then defied Him.

ADAM. Oh! my son,

Blaspheme not: these are serpents'  
words.



CAIN. Why not?  
The snake spoke *truth*; it was the tree  
of knowledge;  
It *was* the tree of life: knowledge is  
good,  
And life is good: and how can both  
be evil?

EVE. My boy! thou speakest as I  
spoke, in sin,  
Before thy birth: let me not see re-  
new'd

My misery in thine. I have repented.  
Let me not see my offspring fall into  
The snares beyond the walls of Para-  
dise,

Which e'en in Paradise destroyed his  
parents.

Content thee with what *is*. Had we been  
so,

Thou now hadst been contented.—Oh,  
my son!

ADAM. Our orisons completed, let us  
hence,

Each to his task of toil—not heavy,  
though

Needful: the earth is young, and yields  
us kindly

Her fruits with little labour.

EVE. Cain, my son,  
Behold thy father cheerful and re-  
sign'd,  
And do as he doth.

[*Exeunt ADAM and EVE.*]

ZILLAH. Wilt thou not, my brother?

ABEL. Why wilt thou wear this gloom  
upon thy brow,  
Which can avail thee nothing, save to  
rouse

The Eternal anger?

ADAH. My beloved Cain,  
Wilt thou frown even on me?

CAIN. No, Adah! no;  
I fain would be alone a little while.  
Abel, I'm sick at heart; but it will pass.  
Precede me, brother—I will follow  
shortly.

And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind;  
Your gentleness must not be harshly  
met:

I'll follow you anon.

ADAH. If not, I will  
Return to seek ye here.

ABEL. The peace of God  
Be on your spirit, brother!

[*Exeunt ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH.*]

CAIN. [*solus*]. And this is  
Life!—Toil! and wherefore should I  
toil?—because

My father could not keep his place in  
Eden!

What had *I* done in this?—I was un-  
born:

I sought not to be born; nor love the  
state

To which that birth has brought me.  
Why did he

Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,  
Yielding, why suffer? What was there  
in this?

The tree was planted, and why not for  
him?

If not, why place him near it, where it  
grew,

The fairest in the centre? They have  
but

One answer to all questions, "Twas *His*  
will

And *He* is good." How know I that?  
Because

He is all-powerful, must all-good, too,  
follow?

I judge but by the fruits—and they are  
bitter—

Which I must feed on for a fault not  
mine.

Whom have we here?—A shape like to  
the angels,

Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect  
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?

Why should I fear him more than other  
spirits,

Whom I see daily wave their fiery  
swords

Before the gates round which I linger  
oft,

In twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of  
those

Gardens which are my just inheritance,  
Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited  
walls

And the immortal trees which overtop  
The cherubim-defended battlements?

If I shrink not from these, the fire-  
arm'd angels,

Why should I quail from him who now  
approaches?

Yet he seems mightier far than them,  
nor less

Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful

As he hath been, and might be: sorrow  
seems  
Half of his immortality. And is it  
So? and can aught grieve save human-  
ity?  
He cometh.

*Enter LUCIFER.*

LUCIFER. Mortal!

CAIN. Spirit, who art thou?

LUCIFER. Master of Spirits.

CAIN. And being so, canst thou  
Leave them and walk with dust?

LUCIFER. I know the thoughts  
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

CAIN. How?  
You know my thoughts?

LUCIFER. They are the thoughts of all  
Worthy of thought;—'tis your immor-  
tal part  
Which speaks within you.

CAIN. What immortal part?  
This has not been reveal'd; the tree of  
life

Was withheld from us, by my father's  
folly

While that of knowledge by my  
mother's haste.

Was pluck'd too soon; and all the fruit  
is death!

LUCIFER. They have deceived thee;  
thou shalt live.

CAIN. I live,  
But live to die, and, living, see no  
thing

To make death hateful, save an innate  
clinging.

A loathsome, and yet all invincible  
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I  
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome—  
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

LUCIFER. Thou livest, and must live  
for ever; think not

The earth, which is thine outward  
cov'ring, is

Existence—it will cease, and thou wilt  
be

No less than thou art now.

CAIN. No less! and why  
No more?

LUCIFER. It may be thou shalt be as  
we.

CAIN. And ye?

LUCIFER. Are everlasting.

CAIN. Are ye happy?

LUCIFER. We are mighty.

CAIN. Are ye happy?

LUCIFER. No: art thou?

CAIN. How should I be so? Look on  
me!

LUCIFER. Poor clay:  
And thou pretendest to be wretched!  
Thou!

CAIN. I am:—and thou, with all thy  
might, what art thou?

LUCIFER. One who aspired to be what  
made thee, and  
Would not have made thee what thou  
art

CAIN. Ah!  
Thou look'st almost a god; and—

LUCIFER. I am none:  
And having fail'd to be one, would be  
nought

Save what I am. He conquer'd: let Him  
reign!

CAIN. Who?

LUCIFER. Thy sire's Maker, and the  
earth's.

CAIN. And heaven's.  
And all that in them is. So I have  
heard

His Seraphs sing; and so my father  
saith.

LUCIFER. They say—what they must  
sing and say, on pain

Of being that which I am—and thou  
art—

Of spirits and of men.

CAIN. And what is that?

LUCIFER. Souls who dare use their im-  
mortality—

Souls who dare look the Omnipotent  
tyrant in

His everlasting face, and tell Him that  
His evil is not good! If He has made.

As He saith—which I know not, nor  
believe—

But if He made us—He cannot un-  
make;

We are immortal!—nay, He'd have us  
so.

That He may torture:—let Him. He is  
great—

But, in His greatness, no happier than  
We in our conflict! Goodness would  
not make

Evil; and what else hath He made? But  
let Him

Sit on His vast and solitary throne,  
 Creating worlds, to make eternity  
 Less burthen some to His immense ex-  
 istence  
 And unparticipated solitude;  
 Let Him crowd orb on orb: He is alone  
 Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;  
 Could He but crush Himself, 'twere the  
 best boon

He ever granted: but, let Him reign on,  
 And multiply Himself in misery!  
 Spirits and men, at least we sympa-  
 thize—

And, suffering in concert make our  
 pangs,

Innumerable, more endurable,  
 By the unbounded sympathy of all  
 With all! But *He!* so wretched in His  
 height,

So restless in His wretchedness, must  
 still

Create, and recreate—

CAIN. Thou speak'st to me of things  
 which long have swum  
 In visions through my thought! I never  
 could

Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.  
 My father and my mother talk to me  
 Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I  
 see

The gates of what they call their Para-  
 dise

Guarded by fiery-sworded cherubim,  
 Which shut them out, and me: I feel  
 the weight

Of daily toil and constant thought: I  
 look

Around a world where I seem nothing,  
 with

Thoughts which arise within me, as if  
 they

Could master all things—but I thought  
 alone

This misery was *mine*.—My father is  
 Tamed down; my mother has forgot the  
 mind

Which made her thirst for knowledge  
 at the risk

Of an eternal curse: my brother is

A watching shepherd boy; who offers up  
 The firstlings of the flock to Him who  
 bids

The earth yield nothing to us without  
 sweat;

My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn

Than the birds' matins; and my Adah,  
 my

Own and beloved, she, too, understands  
 not

The mind which overwhelms me: never  
 till

Now met I aught to sympathize with  
 me.

'Tis well—I rather would consort with  
 spirits.

LUCIFER. And hadst thou not been fit  
 by thine own soul

For such companionship, I would not  
 now

Have stood before thee as I am: a ser-  
 pent

Had been enough to charm ye, as be-  
 fore.

CAIN. Ah! didst *thou* tempt my  
 mother?

LUCIFER. I tempt none,  
 Save with the truth: was not the tree,  
 the tree

Of knowledge? and was not the tree of  
 life

Still fruitful? Did *I* bid her pluck  
 them not?

Did *I* plant things prohibited within  
 The reach of beings innocent, and curi-  
 ous

By their own innocence? I would have  
 made ye

Gods: and even He who thrust ye forth,  
 so thrust ye

Because "ye should not eat the fruits of  
 life,

And become gods as We." Were those  
 His words?

CAIN. They were, as I have heard  
 from those

In thunder.

LUCIFER. Then who was the demon?  
 He who heard them,

Who would not let ye live, or he who  
 would

Have made ye live for ever in the joy  
 And power of knowledge?

CAIN. Would they had snatch'd both  
 The fruits, or neither!

LUCIFER. One is yours already;  
 The other may be still.

CAIN. How so?

LUCIFER. By being  
 Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing  
 can

Quench the mind, if the mind will be  
itself  
And centre of surrounding things—'tis  
made  
To sway.

CAIN. But didst thou tempt my par-  
ents?

LUCIFER. I?  
Poor clay! what should I tempt them  
for, or how?

CAIN. They say the serpent was a  
spirit.

LUCIFER. Who  
Saith that? It is not written so on  
high:

The Proud One will not so far falsify,  
Though man's vast fears and little van-  
ity

Would make him cast upon the spiritual  
nature

His own low failing. The snake *was*  
the snake—

No more, and yet not less than those  
he tempted,

In nature being earth also—*more in wis-  
dom,*

Since he could overcome them, and fore-  
knew

The knowledge fatal to their narrow  
joys.

Think'st thou I'd take the shape of  
things that die?

CAIN. But the thing had a demon?

LUCIFER. He but woke one  
In those he spake to with his forky  
tongue.

I tell thee that the serpent was no more  
Than a mere serpent: ask the cherubim  
Who guard the tempting tree. When  
thousand ages

Have roll'd o'er your dead ashes, and  
your seed's,

The seed of the then world may thus  
array

Their earliest fault in fable, and at-  
tribute

To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all  
That bows to Him, who made things  
but to bend

Before His sullen, sole eternity;  
But we who see the truth must speak  
it. Thy

Fond parents listen'd to a creeping  
thing,

And fell. For what should spirits tempt  
them? What

Was there to envy in the narrow bounds  
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade  
Space—but I speak to thee of what  
thou know'st not,  
With all thy tree of knowledge.

CAIN. But thou canst not  
Speak aught of knowledge which I  
would not know,  
And do not thirst to know, and bear a  
mind  
To know.

LUCIFER. And heart to look on?

CAIN. Be it proved.

LUCIFER. Darest thou look on Death?

CAIN. He has not yet.  
Been seen.

LUCIFER. But must be undergone.

CAIN. My father  
Says he is something dreadful, and my  
mother

Weeps when he is named; and Abel  
lifts his eyes

To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the  
earth,

And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks  
on me,

And speaks not.

LUCIFER. And thou?

CAIN. Thoughts unspeakable  
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I  
hear

Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,  
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?  
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,  
In play, till he ran roaring from my  
gripe.

LUCIFER. It has no shape, but will  
absorb all things

That bear the form of earth-born being.  
CAIN. Ah!

I thought it was a being: who could do  
Such evil things to being save a being?

LUCIFER. Ask the Destroyer.

CAIN. Who?

LUCIFER. The Maker—call Him  
Which name thou wilt; He makes but  
to destroy.

CAIN. I knew not that, yet thought it,  
since I heard

Of death: although I know not what  
it is,

Yet it seems horrible. I have look'd  
out



In the vast desolate night in search of him;

And when I saw gigantic shadows in  
The umbrage of the walls of Eden,  
chequer'd

By the far-flashing of the cherubs'  
swords,

I watch'd for what I thought his coming;  
for

With fear rose longing, in my heart to  
know

What 'twas which shook us all—but  
nothing came.

And then I turn'd my weary eyes from  
off

Our native and forbidden Paradise,  
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,  
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too,  
die?

LUCIFER. Perhaps—but long outlive  
both thine and thee.

CAIN. I'm glad of that: I would not  
have them die—

They are so lovely. What is death? I  
fear,

I feel it is a dreadful thing; but what,  
I cannot compass: 'tis denounced  
against us,

Both them who sinn'd and sinn'd not,  
as an ill—

What ill?

LUCIFER. To be resolved into the  
earth.

CAIN. But shall I know it?

LUCIFER. As I know not death,  
I cannot answer.

CAIN. Were I quiet earth,  
That were no evil: would I ne'er had  
been

Aught else but dust!

LUCIFER. That is a grovelling wish,  
Less than thy father's, for he wish'd to  
know.

CAIN. But not to live, or wherefore  
pluck'd he not

The life-tree?

LUCIFER. He was hinder'd.

CAIN. Deadly error!  
Not to snatch first that fruit: but ere  
he pluck'd

The knowledge, he was ignorant of  
death.

Alas, I scarcely now know what it is;  
And yet I fear it—fear I know not  
what.

LUCIFER. And I, who know all things,  
fear nothing; see  
What is true knowledge.

CAIN. Wilt thou teach me all?

LUCIFER. Ay, upon one condition.

CAIN. Name it.

LUCIFER. That  
Thou dost fall down and worship me—  
thy Lord.

CAIN. Thou art not the Lord my fa-  
ther worships.

LUCIFER. No.

CAIN. His equal?

LUCIFER. No: I have nought in  
common with him!

Nor would; I would be aught above—  
beneath—

Aught save a sharer or a servant of  
His power, I dwell apart; but I am  
great:—

Many there are who worship me, and  
more

Who shall—be thou among the first.

CAIN. I never  
As yet have bow'd unto my father's  
God,

Although my brother Abel oft implores  
That I would join with him in sacri-  
fice:—

Why should I bow to thee?

LUCIFER. Hast thou ne'er bowed  
To Him?

CAIN. Have I not said it?—need I  
say it?

Could not thy mighty knowledge teach  
thee that?

LUCIFER. He who bows not to Him  
has bow'd to me!

CAIN. But I will bend to neither.

LUCIFER. Ne'er the less,  
Thou art my worshipper; not worship-  
ping

Him, makes thee mine the same.

CAIN. And what is that?

LUCIFER. Thou'lt know here—and  
hereafter.

CAIN. Let me but  
Be taught the mystery of my being.

LUCIFER. Follow

CAIN. But I must retire  
To till the earth—for I had prom-  
ised—

LUCIFER. What?

CAIN. To cull some first-fruits.

LUCIFER. Why?

CAIN. To offer up  
With Abel on an altar.

LUCIFER. Saidst thou not  
Thou ne'er hadst bent to Him who made  
thee?

CAIN. Yes:—  
But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought  
upon me:

The offering is more his than mine—  
and Adah—

LUCIFER. Why dost thou hesitate?

CAIN. She is my sister.  
Born on the same day, of the same  
womb: and  
She wrung from me, with tears, this  
promise; and

Rather than see her weep. I would, methinks,

Bear all—and worship aught.

LUCIFER. Then follow me!

CAIN. I will.

*Enter ADAM.*

ADAM. My brother, I have come for  
thee;

It is our hour of rest and joy—and we  
Have less without thee. Thou hast labour'd not

This morn; but I have done thy task:  
the fruits

Are ripe, and glowing as the light which  
ripens:

Come away.

CAIN. Seest thou not?

ADAM. I see an angel:  
We have seen many: will he share our  
hour

Of rest?—he is welcome.

CAIN. But he is not like

The angels we have seen.

ADAM. Are there, then, others?  
But he is welcome, as they were: they  
deign'd

To be our guests—will he?

CAIN [to LUCIFER]. Wilt thou?

LUCIFER. I ask  
Thee to be mine.

CAIN. I must away with him.

ADAM. And leave us?

CAIN. Ay.

ADAM. And me?

CAIN. Beloved Adah!

ADAM. Let me go with thee.

LUCIFER. No, she must not.

ADAM. Who  
Art thou that steppest between heart  
and heart?

CAIN. He is a god.

ADAM. How know'st thou?

CAIN. He speaks like  
A god.

ADAM. So did the Serpent, and it lied:

LUCIFER. Thou errest, Adah!—was  
not the tree that  
Of knowledge?

ADAM. Ay—to our eternal sorrow.

LUCIFER. And yet that grief is knowl-  
edge—so he lied not:

And if he did betray you, 'twas with  
truth;

And truth in its own essence cannot be  
But good.

ADAM. But all we know of it has  
gather'd

Evil on ill: expulsion from our home,  
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and  
heaviness;

Remorse of that which was—and hope  
of that

Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with  
this spirit.

Bear with what we have borne, and  
love me—I

Love thee.

LUCIFER. More than thy mother, and  
thy sire?

ADAM. I do. Is that a sin, too?

LUCIFER. No, not yet:  
It one day will be in your children.

ADAM. What!  
Must not my daughter love her brother  
Enoch?

LUCIFER. Not as thou lovest Cain.

ADAM. Oh, my God!  
Shall they not love, and bring forth  
things that love

Out of their love? have they not drawn  
their milk

Out of this bosom? was not he, their  
father,

Born of the same sole womb, in the  
same hour

With me? Did we not love each other?  
and

In multiplying our being multiply  
Things which will love each other as  
we love

Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain!  
 go not  
 Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

LUCIFER. The sin I speak of is not of  
 my making,  
 And cannot be a sin in you—whate'er  
 It seems in those who will replace ye in  
 Mortality.

ADAH. What is the sin which is not  
 Sin in itself? Can circumstance make  
 sin  
 Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves  
 Of—

LUCIFER. Higher things than ye are  
 slaves: and higher  
 Than them or ye would be so, did they  
 not

Prefer an independency of torture  
 To the smooth agonies of adulation,  
 In hymns and harpings, and self-seek-  
 ing prayers,  
 To that which is omnipotence, because  
 It is omnipotent, and not from love,  
 But terror and self-hope.

ADAH. Omnipotence  
 Must be all goodness.

LUCIFER. Was it so in Eden?

ADAH. Fiend! tempt me not with  
 beauty; thou art fairer  
 Than was the serpent, and as false.

LUCIFER. As true.  
 Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the  
 knowledge  
 Of good and evil?

ADAH. Oh, my mother! thou  
 Hast pluck'd a fruit more fatal to thine  
 offspring  
 Than to thyself; thou at the least hast  
 pass'd  
 Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent  
 And happy intercourse with happy  
 spirits:

But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,  
 Are girt about by demons, who assume  
 The words of God, and tempt us with  
 our own  
 Dissatisfied and curious thoughts—as  
 thou

Wert work'd on by the snake, in thy  
 most flush'd  
 And heedless, harmless wantonness of  
 bliss.

I cannot answer this immortal thing  
 Which stands before me: I cannot ab-  
 hor him;

I look upon him with a pleasing fear,  
 And yet I fly not from him: in his eye  
 There is a fastening attraction which  
 Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my  
 heart

Beats quick; he awes me, and yet  
 draws me near,  
 Nearer and nearer:—Cain—Cain—save  
 me from him!

CAIN. What dreads my Adah? This  
 is no ill spirit.

ADAH. He is not God—nor God's: I  
 have beheld  
 The cherubs and the seraphs; he looks  
 not  
 Like them.

CAIN. But there are spirits loftier  
 still—The archangels.

LUCIFER. And still loftier than the  
 archangels.

ADAH. Ay—but not blessed.

LUCIFER. If the blessedness  
 Consists in slavery—no.

ADAH. I have heard it said,  
 The seraphs *love most*, cherubim *know*  
*most*,  
 And this should be a cherub—since he  
 loves not.

LUCIFER. And if the higher knowl-  
 edge quenches love,  
 What must *he be* you cannot love when  
 known?  
 Since the all-knowing cherubim love  
 least,

The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:  
 That they are not compatible, the doom  
 Of thy fond parents, for their daring,  
 proves.

Choose between love and knowledge—  
 since there is  
 No other choice: your sire hath chosen  
 already;  
 His worship is but fear.

ADAH. Oh, Cain! choose love.

CAIN. For thee, my Adah, I choose  
 not—it was  
 Born with me—but I love nought else.

ADAH. Our parents?

CAIN. Did they love us when they  
 snatch'd from the tree  
 That which hath driven us all from Par-  
 adise?

ADAH. We were not born then—and  
if we had been,  
Should we not love them and our chil-  
dren, Cain?

CAIN. My little Enoch! and his lisp-  
ing sister?  
Could I but deem them happy, I would  
half  
Forget—but it can never be forgotten  
Through thrice a thousand generations!  
Never  
Shall men love the remembrance of the  
man  
Who sow'd the seed of evil and man-  
kind  
In the same hour! They pluck'd the  
tree of science  
And sin—and, not content with their  
own sorrow,  
Begot *me—thee*—and all the few that  
are,  
And all the unnumber'd and innumer-  
able  
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which  
may be,  
To inherit agonies accumulated  
By ages!—and *I* must be sire of such  
things!  
Thy beauty and thy love—my love and  
joy,  
The rapturous moment and the placid  
hour,  
All we love in our children and each  
other,  
But lead them and ourselves through  
many years  
Of sin and pain—or few, but still of  
sorrow,  
Intercheck'd with an instant of brief  
pleasure,  
To Death—the unknown! Methinks  
the tree of knowledge  
Hath not fulfill'd its promise—if they  
sinn'd,  
At least they ought to have known all  
things that are  
Of knowledge—and the mystery of  
death.  
What do they know?—that they are  
miserable.  
What need of snakes and fruits to teach  
us that?

ADAH. I am not wretched, Cain; and  
if thou  
Wert happy—

CAIN. Be thou happy, then, alone—  
I will have nought to do with happiness,  
Which humbles me and mine.

ADAH. Alone I could not,  
Nor *would* be happy; but with those  
around us  
I think I could be so, despite of death,  
Which, as I know it not, I dread not,  
though  
It seems an awful shadow—if I may  
Judge from what I have heard.

LUCIFER. And thou couldst not  
*Alone*, thou say'st be happy?

ADAH. Alone! Oh, my God!  
Who could be happy and alone, or  
good?  
To me my solitude seems sin; unless  
When I think how soon I shall see my  
brother,  
His brother, and our children, and our  
parents.

LUCIFER. Yet thy God is alone; and is  
He happy,  
Lonely, and good?

ADAH. He is not so; He hath  
The angels and the mortals to make  
happy,  
And this becomes so in diffusing joy.  
What else can joy be, but the spreading  
joy?

LUCIFER. Ask of your sire, the exile  
fresh from Eden;  
Or of his first-born son; ask your own  
heart;  
It is not tranquil.

ADAH. Alas, no! and you—  
Are you of heaven?

LUCIFER. If I am not, inquire  
The cause of this all-spreading happi-  
ness  
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great  
and good  
Maker of life and living things; it is  
His secret, and He keeps it. *We* must  
bear,  
And some of us resist, and both in vain,  
His seraphs say; but it is worth the  
trial,  
Since better may not be without: there  
is  
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs  
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye  
Of you, young mortals, lights at once  
upon



The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

ADAH. It is a beautiful star; I love it for its beauty.

LUCIFER. And why not adore?

ADAH. Our father Adores the Invisible only.

LUCIFER. But the symbols Of the Invisible are the loveliest Of what is visible; and yon bright star Is leader of the host of heaven.

ADAH. Our father Saith that he has beheld the God Himself

Who made him and our mother.

LUCIFER. Hast *thou* seen Him?

ADAH. Yes—in His works.

LUCIFER. But in His being?

ADAH. No—Save in my father, who is God's own image;

Or in His angels, who are like to thee—And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful

In seeming: as the silent sunny noon, All light they look upon us; but thou seem'st

Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds

Streak the deep purple, and unnumber'd stars

Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault With things that look as if they would be suns;

So beautiful, unnumber'd and endearing, Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,

They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.

Thou seem'st unhappy: do not make us so,

And I will weep for thee.

LUCIFER. Alas! those tears! Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed—

ADAH. By me?

LUCIFER. By all.

ADAH. What all!

LUCIFER. The million millions—The myriad myriads—the all-peopled earth—

The unpeopled earth—and the o'er-peopled Hell,

Of which thy bosom is the germ.

ADAH. O Cain! This spirit curseth us.

CAIN. Let him say on; Him will I follow.

ADAH. Whither?

LUCIFER. To a place

Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour:

But in that hour see things of many days.

ADAH. How can that be?

LUCIFER. Did not your Maker make Out of old worlds this new one in few days?

And cannot I, who aided in this work, Show in an hour what He hath made in many,

Or hath destroyed in few?

CAIN. Lead on.

ADAH. Will he, In sooth, return within an hour?

LUCIFER. He shall.

With us acts are exempt from time, and we

Can crowd eternity into an hour,

Or stretch an hour into eternity;

We breathe not by a mortal measurement—

But that's a mystery. Cain come on with me.

ADAH. Will he return?

LUCIFER. Ay, woman! he alone Of mortals from that place (the first and last

Who shall return, save One) shall come back to thee,

To make that silent and expectant world As populous as this: at present there Are few inhabitants.

ADAH. Where dwellest thou?

LUCIFER. Throughout all space.

Where should I dwell? Where are Thy God or Gods—there am I: all things are

Divided with me; life and death—and time—

Eternity—and heaven and earth—and that

Which is not heaven nor earth but peopled with

Those who once peopled or shall people both—

These are my realms! So that I do divide

His, and possess a kingdom which is not His. If I were not that which I have said,

Could I stand here? His angels are within  
Your vision.

ADAH. So they were when the fair serpent  
Spoke with our mother first.

LUCIFER. Cain! thou hast heard,  
If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate

That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits

Which shall deprive thee of a single good

The Conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

CAIN. Spirit, I have said it.

[*Exeunt LUCIFER and CAIN.*]

ADAH [*follows, exclaiming.*] Cain!  
My brother! Cain!

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*The Abyss of Space.*

CAIN. I tread on air, and sink not;  
yet I fear to sink.

LUCIFER. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be  
Borne on the air, of which I am the prince.

CAIN. Can I do so without impiety?

LUCIFER. Believe—and sink not!  
doubt—and perish! thus

Would run the edict of the other God,  
Who names me demon to His angels;  
they

Echo the sound to miserable things,  
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,

Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem

Evil or good what is proclaim'd to them  
In their abasement. I will have none such:

Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold

The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be

Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,

With torture of *my* dooming. There will come

An hour, when, toss'd upon some water-drops,

A man shall say to a man, "Believe in me,

And walk the waters;" and the man shall walk

The billows and be safe. *I* will not say, Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed

To save thee; but fly with me o'er the gulf

Of space an equal flight, and I will show What thou dar'st not deny—the history

Of past, and present, and of future worlds.

CAIN. Oh, god, or demon, or whatever thou art,

Is yon our earth?

LUCIFER. Dost thou not recognize The dust which form'd your father?

CAIN. Can it be? Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,

With an inferior circlet near it still, Which looks like that which lit our earthly night?

Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,

And they who guard them?

LUCIFER. Point me out the site Of Paradise.

CAIN. How should I? As we move Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,

And as it waxes little, and then less, Gathers a halo round it, like the light Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I

Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:

Methinks they both, as we recede from them,

Appear to join the innumerable stars Which are around us; and, as we move on,

Increase their myriads.

LUCIFER. And if there should be Worlds greater than thine own, inhabited

By greater things, and they themselves far more

In number than the dust of thy dull earth,

Though multiplied to animated atoms. All living, and all doom'd to death, and wretched,

What wouldst thou think?

CAIN. I should be proud of thought  
Which knew such things.

LUCIFER. But if that high thought  
were

Link'd to a servile mass of matter, and  
Knowing such things, aspiring to such  
things,

And science still beyond them, were  
chain'd down

To the most gross and petty paltry  
wants,

All foul and fulsome, and the very best  
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degrada-  
tion.

A most enervating and filthy cheat  
To lure thee on to the renewal of  
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoom'd  
to be

As frail, and few so happy—

CAIN. Spirit! I  
Know nought of death, save as a dread-  
ful thing

Of which I have heard my parents  
speak, as of

A hideous heritage I owe to them  
No less than life; a heritage not happy.  
If I may judge, till now. But, spirit! if  
It be as thou hast said (and I within  
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),  
Here let me die: for to give birth to  
those

Who can but suffer many years, and die,  
Methinks is merely propagating death,  
And multiplying murder.

LUCIFER. Thou canst not  
*All* die—there is what must survive.

CAIN. The Other  
Spake not of this unto my father, when  
He shut him forth from Paradise, with  
death

Written upon his forehead. But at least  
Let what is mortal of me perish, that  
I may be in the rest as angels are.

LUCIFER. I am angelic: wouldst thou  
be as I am?

CAIN. I know not what thou art: I  
see thy power,

And see thou show'st me things beyond  
my power,

Beyond all power of my born faculties,  
Although inferior still to my desires  
And my conceptions.

LUCIFER. What are they which dwell

So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn  
With worms in clay?

CAIN. And what art thou who dwell-  
est

So haughtily in spirit, and canst range  
Nature and immortality—and yet  
Seem'st sorrowful?

LUCIFER. I seem that which I am;  
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou  
Wouldst be immortal?

CAIN. Thou hast said, I must be  
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not  
This until lately—but since it must be,  
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn  
To anticipate my immortality.

LUCIFER. Thou didst before I came  
upon thee.

CAIN. How?

LUCIFER. By suffering.

CAIN. And must torture be immortal?

LUCIFER. We and thy sons will try.  
But now, behold!

Is it not glorious?

CAIN. Oh, thou beautiful  
And unimaginable ether! and  
Ye multiplying masses of increased  
And still increasing lights! what are  
ye? what

Is this blue wilderness of interminable  
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen  
The leaves along the limpid streams of  
Eden?

Is your course measured for ye? Or do  
ye

Sweep on in your unbounded revelry  
Through an aerial universe of endless  
Expansion—at which my soul aches to  
think—

Intoxicated with eternity?

O God! O Gods! or whatsoever ye are!  
How beautiful ye are! how beautiful  
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoever  
They may be! Let me die, as atoms die  
(If that they die), or know ye in your  
might

And knowledge! My thoughts are not  
in this hour

Unworthy what I see, though my dust is.  
Spirit! let me expire, or see them near-  
er.

LUCIFER. Art thou not nearer? Look  
back to thine earth!

CAIN. Where is it? I see nothing  
save a mass

Of most innumerable lights.

LUCIFER. Look there!

CAIN. I cannot see it.

LUCIFER. Yet it sparkles still.

CAIN. That!—yonder!

LUCIFER. Yea.

CAIN. And wilt thou tell me so?

Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms

Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks

In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world

Which bears them.

LUCIFER. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,

Each bright and sparkling—what dost think of them?

CAIN. That they are beautiful in their own sphere,

And that the night, which makes both beautiful,

The little shining fire-fly in its flight,

And the immortal star in its great course,

Must both be guided.

LUCIFER. But by whom or what?

CAIN. Show me.

LUCIFER. Dar'st thou behold?

CAIN. How know I what I dare behold? As yet thou hast shown nought

I dare not gaze on further.

LUCIFER. On, then, with me.

Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal?

CAIN. Why, what are things?

LUCIFER. Both partly: but what doth sit next thy heart?

CAIN. The things I see.

LUCIFER. But what

*Sate* nearest it?

CAIN. The things I have not seen, Nor ever shall—the mysteries of death.

LUCIFER. What, if I show to thee things which have died,

As I have shown thee much which cannot die?

CAIN. Do so.

LUCIFER. Away, then, on our mighty wings.

CAIN. Oh, how we cleave the blue!

The stars fade from us!

The earth! where is my earth? Let me look on it,

For I was made of it.

LUCIFER. 'Tis now beyond thee, Less, in the universe, than thou in it; Yet deem not that thou canst escape it: thou

Shalt soon return to earth and all its dust:

'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine.

CAIN. Where dost thou lead me?

LUCIFER. To what was before thee! The phantasm of the world; of which thy world

Is but the wreck.

CAIN. What! is it not then new?

LUCIFER. No more than life is; and that was ere thou

Or *I* were, or the things which seem to us

Greater than either; many things will have

No end; and some, which would pretend to have

Had no beginning, have had one as mean

As thou; and mightier things have been extinct

To make way for much meaner than we can

Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space*

Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.

But changes make not death, except to clay;

But thou art clay—and canst but comprehend

That which was clay; and such thou shalt behold.

CAIN. Clay, spirit! what thou wilt, I can survey.

LUCIFER. Away, then!

CAIN. But the lights fade from me fast,

And some till now grew larger as we approach'd,

And wore the look of worlds.

LUCIFER. And such they are.

CAIN. And Edens in them?

LUCIFER. It may be.

CAIN. And men?

LUCIFER. Yea, or things higher.

CAIN. Ay? and serpents too?

LUCIFER. Wouldst thou have men without them? must no reptiles

Breathe save the erect ones?



CAIN. How the lights recede!  
Where fly we?

LUCIFER. To the world of phantoms,  
which  
Are beings past, and shadows still to  
come.

CAIN. But it grows dark, and dark—  
the stars are gone!

LUCIFER. And yet thou seest.

CAIN. 'Tis a fearful light!  
No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable.  
The very blue of the empurpled night  
Fades to a dreary twilight, yet I see  
Huge dusky masses: but unlike the  
worlds

We were approaching, which, begirt  
with light,

Seem'd full of life even when their at-  
mosphere

Of light gave way, and show'd them  
taking shapes

Unequal, of deep valleys and vast moun-  
tains;

And some emitting sparks, and some  
displaying

Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt  
With luminous belts, and floating  
moons, which took,

Like them, the features of fair earth:—  
instead,

All here seems dark and dreadful.

LUCIFER. But distinct.  
Thou seekest to behold death and dead  
things?

CAIN. I seek it not; but as I know  
there are

Such, and that my sire's sin makes him  
and me,

And all that we inherit, liable  
To such, I would behold at once, what I  
Must one day see perforce.

LUCIFER. Behold!

CAIN. 'Tis darkness.

LUCIFER. And so it shall be ever; but  
we will

Unfold its gates!

CAIN. Enormous vapours roll  
Apart—what's this?

LUCIFER. Enter!

CAIN. Can I return?

LUCIFER. Return! be sure: how else  
should death be peopled?

Its present realm is thin to what it will  
be,

Through thee and thine.

CAIN. The clouds still open wide  
And wider, and make widening circles  
round us.

LUCIFER. Advance!

CAIN. And thou

LUCIFER. Fear not—without me thou  
Couldst not have gone beyond thy  
world. On! on!

[*They disappear through the clouds.*]

## SCENE II.—Hades.

*Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.*

CAIN. How silent and how vast are  
these dim worlds!

For they seem more than one, and yet  
more peopled

Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs  
which swung

So thickly in the upper air, that I  
Had deem'd them rather the bright pop-  
ulace

Of some all unimaginable Heaven,  
Than things to be inhabited themselves,

But that on drawing near them I beheld  
Their swelling into palpable immensity

Of matter, which seem'd made for life  
to dwell on,

Rather than life itself. But here, all is  
So shadowy and so full of twilight, that

It speaks of a day past.

LUCIFER. It is the realm  
Of death.—Wouldst have it present?

CAIN. Till I know  
That which it really is, I cannot answer.

But if it be as I have heard my father  
Deal out in his long homilies, 'tis a  
thing—

O God! I dare not think on't! Cursèd  
be

He who invented life that leads to  
death!

Or the dull mass of life, that, being life,  
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit

it—  
Even for the innocent!

LUCIFER. Dost thou curse thy father?

CAIN. Cursèd he not me in giving me  
my birth?

Cursèd he not me before my birth, in  
daring

To pluck the fruit forbidden?

LUCIFER. Thou say'st well:



The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee—

But for thy sons and brother?

CAIN. Let them share it  
With me, their sire and brother! What  
else is

Bequeath'd to me? I leave them my  
inheritance.

Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms  
Of swimming shadows and enormous  
shapes,

Some fully shown, some indistinct, and  
all

Mighty and melancholy—what are ye?  
Live ye, or have ye lived?

LUCIFER. Somewhat of both.

CAIN. Then what is death?

LUCIFER. What? Hath not He who  
made ye

Said 'tis another life?

CAIN. Till now He hath  
Said nothing, save that all shall die.

LUCIFER. Perhaps  
He one day will unfold that further  
secret.

CAIN. Happy the day!

LUCIFER. Yes; happy; when unfolded  
Through agonies unspeakable, and  
clogg'd

With agonies eternal, to innumerable  
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious  
atoms,

All to be animated for this only!

CAIN. What are these mighty phan-  
toms which I see  
Floating around me?—They wear not  
the form

Of the intelligences I have seen  
Round our regretted and unenter'd  
Eden,

Nor wear the form of man as I have  
view'd it

In Adam's, and in Abel's, and in mine,  
Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my chil-  
dren's:

And yet they have an aspect, which,  
though not

Of men nor angels, looks like something  
which,

If not the last, rose higher than the  
first,

Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and  
full

Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable

Shape; for I never saw such. They bear  
not

The wing of seraph, nor the face of  
man,

Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught  
that is

Now breathing; mighty yet and beau-  
tiful

As the most beautiful and mighty which  
Live, and yet so unlike them, that I  
scarce

Can call them living.

LUCIFER. Yet they lived.

CAIN. Where?

LUCIFER. Where

Thou livest.

CAIN. When?

LUCIFER. On what thou callest earth  
They did inhabit.

CAIN. Adam is the first.

LUCIFER. Of thine I grant thee—but  
too mean to be

The last of these.

CAIN. And what are they?

LUCIFER. That which  
Thou shalt be.

CAIN. But what *were* they?

LUCIFER. Living, high,  
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious  
things,

As much superior unto all thy sire,  
Adam, could e'er have been in Eden, as  
The sixty-thousandth generation shall  
be,

In its dull, damp degeneracy, to  
Thee and thy son:—and how weak they  
are, judge

By thy own flesh.

CAIN. Ah me! and did *they* perish?

LUCIFER. Yes, from their earth, as  
thou wilt fade from thine.

CAIN. But was *mine* theirs?

LUCIFER. It was.

CAIN. But not as now.

It is too little and too lowly to  
Sustain such creatures.

LUCIFER. True, it was more glorious.

CAIN. And wherefore did it fall?

LUCIFER. Ask Him who fells.

CAIN. But how?

LUCIFER. By a most crushing and in-  
exorable  
Destruction and disorder of the ele-  
ments,

Which struck a world to chaos, as a  
chaos

Subsiding has struck out a world; such  
things,

Though rare in time, are frequent in  
eternity.—

Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

CAIN. 'Tis awful!

LUCIFER. And true. Behold these  
phantoms! they were once

Material, as thou art.

CAIN. And must I be

Like them?

LUCIFER. Let Him who made thee an-  
swer that.

I show thee what thy predecessors are,  
And what they *were* thou feelest, in de-  
gree

Inferior as thy petty feelings and  
Thy pettier portion of the immortal  
part

Of high intelligence and earthly  
strength.

What ye in common have with what  
they had

Is life, and what ye *shall* have—death:  
the rest

Of your poor attributes is such as suits  
Reptiles engender'd out of the subsiding  
Slime of a mighty universe, crush'd into  
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled  
with

Things whose enjoyment was to be in  
blindness—

A Paradise of Ignorance, from which  
Knowledge was barr'd as poison. But  
behold

What these superior beings are or were;  
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till  
The earth, thy task—I'll waft thee there  
in safety.

CAIN. No; I'll stay here.

LUCIFER. How long?

CAIN. For ever! Since  
I must one day return here from the  
earth,

I rather would remain, I am sick of all  
That dust has shown me—let me dwell  
in shadows.

LUCIFER. It cannot be: thou now be-  
holdest as

A vision that which is reality.

To make thyself fit for this dwelling,  
thou

Must pass through what the things thou  
seest have pass'd—

The gates of death.

CAIN. By what gate have we enter'd  
Even now?

LUCIFER. By mine! But, plighted to  
return,

My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in  
regions

Where all is breathless save thyself.  
Gaze on;

But do not think to dwell here till thine  
hour

Is come.

CAIN. And these, too; can they ne'er  
repass

To earth again?

LUCIFER. *Their* earth is gone for-  
ever—

So changed by its convulsion, they  
would not

Be conscious to a single present spot  
Of its new scarcely harden'd surface—  
'twas—

Oh, what a beautiful world it *was*!

CAIN. And is.

It is not with the earth, though I must  
till it,

I feel at war, but that I may not profit  
By what it bears of beautiful, untailing,  
Nor gratify my thousand, swelling  
thoughts

With knowledge, nor allay my thousand  
fears

Of death and life.

LUCIFER. What thy world is, thou  
seest,

But canst not comprehend the shadow  
of

That which it was.

CAIN. And those enormous creatures,  
Phantoms inferior in intelligence  
(At least so seeming) to the things we  
have pass'd,

Resembling somewhat the wild habitants  
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest  
which

Roar nightly in the forest, but tenfold  
In magnitude and terror; taller than  
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden, with  
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which  
fence them,

And tusks projecting like the trees  
stripp'd of

Then bark and branches—what were they?

LUCIFER. That which  
The Mammoth is in thy world, but  
these be

Be minutes underneath its surface

CAIN. But

None on it!

LUCIFER. No, for thy trail runs to  
naught

With them would render the curse on  
it useless—

“Should be destroy’d so early.

CAIN. But why were?

LUCIFER. You have forgotten me in  
your dream

Which drive your race from Eden—  
war with all things.

And death to all things, and disease to  
most things.

And pains, and bitterness, there were  
the fruits

Of the forbidden tree.

CAIN. But animals—

Did they, too, eat of it, that they must  
die?

LUCIFER. Your Maker told ye, they  
were made for you.

As you for Him.—You would not have  
their doom

Superior to your own? Had Adam  
not

Fallen, all had stood.

CAIN. Alas, the hopeless wretches!

They too must share my sire’s fate, like  
his sons:

Like them, too, without having shared  
the apple;

Like them, too, without the so dear-  
bought knowledge.

It was a long time—for we knew nothing.

At least it promised knowledge at the  
price

Of death—but knowledge still, but what  
avails man?

LUCIFER. It may be death leads to the  
highest knowledge.

And being of all things the sole thing  
certain.

At least leads to the nearer sciences:  
therefore

The tree was true, though death.

CAIN. These are realms

I see them, but I know them not:

LUCIFER. Because  
The hour is yet afar, and man can  
not

Comprehend, since wholly—far to  
something

To know there are such realms.

CAIN. We know already  
That there was death.

LUCIFER. But not what was beyond it.

CAIN. Nor know I now.

LUCIFER. Then knowest that there is  
A state, and many states beyond that  
one—

And this thou knowest yet this morn-  
ing.

CAIN. But all  
Seems dim and shadowy.

LUCIFER. Be cunning, it will  
Seem clearer to thine imagination.

CAIN. And yet immeasurable, bound-  
less space

Of glorious azure which flows on be-  
yond us.

Which looks like water, and which I  
should deem

The river which flows out of Paradise.

Fast my own dwelling, but that it is  
bankless

And boundless, and of ethereal hue—  
What is it?

LUCIFER. There is still some such on  
earth

Although crimson, and thy children  
shall

Death near it—’tis the phantasm of an  
ocean

CAIN. ’Tis like another world, a  
liquid sun—

And these inordinate creatures sporting  
o’er

Its shining surface?

LUCIFER. Are its inhabitants;  
The past legions.

CAIN. And you immense  
Serpent, which rears his coiling mane

and vasty  
Head ten times higher than the height-  
lest cedar

North from the abyss, looking as he  
could coil

Himself around the coils we fancy  
look’d on—

Is he not of the kind which bask’d be-  
neath

The tree in Eden?  
LUCIFER. Ere, thy mother, best

Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

CAIN. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other Had more of beauty.

LUCIFER. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?

CAIN. Many of the same kind (at least so call'd), But never that precisely which persuaded

The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

LUCIFER. Your father saw him not?

CAIN. No; 'twas my mother Who tempted him—she tempted by the serpent.

LUCIFER. Good man! whene'er thy wife, or thy sons' wives, Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or strange, Be sure thou seest first who hath tempted *them*.

CAIN. Thy precept comes too late; there is no more For serpents to tempt woman to.

LUCIFER. But there Are some things still which woman may tempt man to, And man tempt woman:—let thy sons look to it!

My counsel is a kind one: for 'tis even Given chiefly at my own expense: 'tis true, 'Twill not be follow'd, so there's little lost.

CAIN. I understand not this.

LUCIFER. The happier thou!—Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest Thyself most wicked and unhappy; is it Not so?

CAIN. For crime, I know not, but for pain I have felt much.

LUCIFER. First-born of the first man! Thy present state of sin—and thou art evil—

Of sorrow—and thou sufferest—are both Eden

In all its innocence compared to what *Thou* shortly may'st be; and that state again

In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise

To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating

In generations like to dust (which they In fact but add to), shall endure and do.—

Now let us back to earth!

CAIN. And wherefore didst thou Lead me here only to inform me this?

LUCIFER. Was not thy quest for knowledge?

CAIN. Yes; as being

The road to happiness.

LUCIFER. If truth be so, Thou hast it.

CAIN. Then my father's God did well When He prohibited the fatal tree.

LUCIFER. But had done better in not planting it.

But ignorance of evil doth not save, From evil; it must still roll on the same, A part of all things.

CAIN. Not of all things. No; I'll not believe it—for I thirst for good.

LUCIFER. And who and what doth not? *Who* covets evil For its own bitter sake?—*None*—nothing! 'tis

The heaven of all life, and lifelessness.

CAIN. Within those glorious orbs which we beheld,

Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable, Ere we came down into this phantom realm,

Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful.

LUCIFER. Thou hast seen them from afar—

CAIN. And what of that? Distance can but diminish glory—they When nearer, must be more ineffable.

LUCIFER. Approach the things of earth most beautiful, And judge their beauty near.

CAIN. I have done this—The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

LUCIFER. Then there must be delusion. —What is that,

Which being nearest to thine eyes is still

More beautiful than beauteous things remote?

CAIN. My sister Adah.—All the stars of heaven,

The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb



Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world—

The hues of twilight—the sun's gorgeous coming—

His setting indescribable, which fills  
My eyes with pleasant tears, as I behold  
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly  
with him

Along that western paradise of clouds—  
The forest shade—the green bough—the  
bird's voice—

The vesper bird's, which seems to sing  
of love,

And mingles with the song of cherubim,  
As the day closes over Eden's walls;—  
All these are nothing, to my eyes and  
heart,

Like Adah's face: I turn from earth  
and heaven

To gaze on it.

LUCIFER. 'Tis fair as frail mortality,  
In the first dawn and bloom of young  
creation,

And earliest embraces of earth's parents  
Can make its offspring; still it is de-  
lusion.

CAIN. You think so, being not her  
brother.

LUCIFER. Mortal!  
My brotherhood's with those who have  
no children.

CAIN. Then thou canst have no fel-  
lowship with us.

LUCIFER. It may be that thine own  
shall be for me.

But if thou dost possess a beautiful  
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,  
Why art thou wretched?

CAIN. Why do I exist?

Why art *thou* wretched? why are all  
things so?

Even He who made us must be, as the  
maker

Of things unhappy! To produce de-  
struction

Can surely never be the task of joy,  
And yet my sire says He's omnipotent:  
Then why is evil—He being good? I  
ask'd

This question of my father; and he  
said,

Because this evil only was the path  
To good. Strange good that must arise  
from out

Its deadly opposite. I lately saw

A lamb stung by a reptile; the poor  
suckling

Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the  
vain

And piteous bleating of its restless dam;  
My father pluck'd some herbs, and laid  
them to

The wound; and by degrees the help-  
less wretch

Resumed its careless life, and rose to  
drain

The mother's milk, who o'er it tremu-  
lous

Stood licking its reviving limbs with  
joy.

Behold, my son! said Adam, how from  
evil

Springs good!

LUCIFER. What didst thou answer?

CAIN. Nothing, for  
He is my father; but I thought, that  
'twere

A better portion for the animal  
Never to have been *stung at all*, than to  
Purchase renewal of its little life  
With agonies unutterable, though  
Dispell'd by antidotes.

LUCIFER. But as thou saidst  
Of all beloved things thou lovest her  
Who shared thy mother's milk, and  
giveth hers

Unto thy children—

CAIN. Most assuredly.

What should I be without her?

LUCIFER. What am I?

CAIN. Dost thou love nothing?

LUCIFER. What does thy God love?

CAIN. All things, my father says; but  
I confess

I see it not in their allotment here.

LUCIFER. And therefore thou canst  
not see if I love

Or no, except some vast and general  
purpose,

To which particular things must melt  
like snows.

CAIN. Snows! what are they?

LUCIFER. Be happier in not knowing  
What thy remoter offspring must en-  
counter;

But bask beneath the clime which knows  
no winter.

CAIN. But dost thou not love some-  
thing like thyself?

LUCIFER. And dost thou love *thyself*?



CAIN. Yes, but love more  
 What makes my feelings more endurable,  
 And is more than myself, because I love it.

LUCIFER. Thou lovest it, because 'tis beautiful,  
 As was the apple in thy mother's eye;  
 And when it ceases to be so, thy love  
 Will cease, like any other appetite.

CAIN. Cease to be beautiful! How can that be?

LUCIFER. With time.

CAIN. But time has past, and hitherto  
 Even Adam and my mother both are fair:  
 Not fair like Adah and the seraphim—  
 But very fair.

LUCIFER. All that must pass away  
 In them and her.

CAIN. I'm sorry for it; but  
 Cannot conceive my love for her the less.  
 And when her beauty disappears, methinks  
 He who creates all beauty will lose more  
 Than me in seeing perish such a work.

LUCIFER. I pity thee, who lovest what must perish.

CAIN. And I thee, who lov'st nothing.

LUCIFER. And thy brother—  
 Sits he not near thy heart?

CAIN. Why should he not?

LUCIFER. Thy father loves him well—  
 so does thy God.

CAIN. And so do I.

LUCIFER. 'Tis well and meekly done.

CAIN. Meekly!

LUCIFER. He is the second born of flesh,  
 And is his mother's favourite.

CAIN. Let him keep  
 Her favour, since the serpent was the first  
 To win it.

LUCIFER. And his father's?

CAIN. What is that  
 To me? should I not love that which  
 all love?

LUCIFER. And the Jehovah—the indulgent Lord,  
 And bounteous planter of barr'd Paradise—  
 He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

CAIN. I  
 Ne'er saw Him, and I know not if He smiles.

LUCIFER. But you have seen His angels.

CAIN. Rarely.

LUCIFER. But  
 Sufficiently to see they love your brother  
 His sacrifices are acceptable.

CAIN. So be they! wherefore speak to me of this?

LUCIFER. Because thou hast thought  
 of this ere now.

CAIN. And if  
 I have thought, why recall a thought that—  
 [*he pauses, as agitated*—Spirit!  
 Here we are in thy world: speak not of mine.

Thou hast shown me wonders: thou  
 hast shown me those  
 Mighty pre-Adamites who walk'd the earth  
 Of which ours is the wreck; thou hast  
 pointed out  
 Myriads of starry worlds, of which our  
 own  
 Is the dim and remote companion, in  
 Infinity of life: thou hast shown me  
 shadows  
 Of that existence with the dreaded name  
 Which my sire brought us—Death; thou  
 hast shown me much—  
 But not all: show me where Jehovah  
 dwells,  
 In His especial Paradise—or *thine*:  
 Where is it?

LUCIFER. Here, and o'er all space.

CAIN. But ye  
 Have some allotted dwelling—as all  
 things;  
 Clay has its earth, and other worlds  
 their tenants;  
 All temporary breathing creatures their  
 Peculiar element; and things which  
 have  
 Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have  
 theirs, thou say'st;  
 And the Jehovah and thyself have  
 thine—  
 Ye do not dwell together?

LUCIFER. No, we reign  
 Together: but our dwellings are asunder.

CAIN. Would there were only one of ye! Perchance

An unity of purpose might make union  
In elements which seem now jarr'd in  
storms.

How came ye, being spirits, wise and  
infinite,

To separate? Are ye not as brethren in  
Your essence, and your nature, and your  
glory?

LUCIFER. Art thou not Abel's brother?

CAIN. We are brethren,  
And so we shall remain: but were it  
not so,

Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out?  
Infinity with Immortality?

Jarring and turning space to misery—  
For what?

LUCIFER. To reign.

CAIN. Did ye not tell me that  
Ye are both eternal?

LUCIFER. Yea!

CAIN. And what I have seen,  
Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

LUCIFER. Ay.

CAIN. And cannot ye both *reign*, then?  
—is there not

Enough?—why should ye differ?

LUCIFER. We *both* reign.

CAIN. But one of you makes evil.

LUCIFER. Which?

CAIN. Thou! for

If thou canst do man good, why dost  
thou not?

LUCIFER. And why not He who made?

I made ye not:

Ye are *His* creatures, and not mine.

CAIN. Then leave us  
*His* creatures, as thou say'st we are, or  
show me

Thy dwelling, or *His* dwelling.

LUCIFER. I could show thee

Both; but the time will come thou shalt  
see one

Of them for evermore.

CAIN. And why not now?

LUCIFER. Thy human mind hath  
scarcely grasp to gather

The little I have shown thee into calm

And clear thought; and thou wouldst  
go on aspiring

To the great double Mysteries! the *two*  
*Principles!*

And gaze upon them on their secret  
thrones!

Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see  
Either of these, would be for thee to  
perish!

CAIN. And let me perish, so I see  
them!

LUCIFER. There

The son of her who snatch'd the apple  
spake!

But thou wouldst only perish, and not  
see them;

That sight is for the other state.

CAIN. Of death!

LUCIFER. That is the prelude.

CAIN. Then I dread it less,  
Now that I know it leads to something  
definite.

LUCIFER. And now I will convey thee  
to thy world,

Where thou shalt multiply the race of  
Adam,

Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep,  
sleep, and die.

CAIN. And to what end have I beheld  
these things

Which thou hast shown me?

LUCIFER. Didst thou not require  
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I  
show'd,

Taught thee to know thyself?

CAIN. Alas! I seem  
Nothing.

LUCIFER. And this should be the hu-  
man sum

Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's  
nothingness:

Bequeath that science to thy children,  
and

'Twill spare them many tortures.

CAIN. Haughty spirit!  
Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself,  
though proud,

Hast a superior.

LUCIFER. No! by heaven, which He  
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity  
Of worlds and life, which I hold with  
Him—No!

I have a victor—true; but no superior.  
Homage He has from all—but none  
from me:

I battle it against Him, as I battled  
In highest heaven. Through all eternity  
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,  
And the interminable realms of space,  
And the infinity of endless ages,

All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,  
 And star by star, and universe by universe,  
 Shall tremble in the balance, till the great  
 Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,  
 Which it ne'er shall, till He or I be quench'd!  
 And what can quench our immortality,  
 Or mutual and irrevocable hate?  
 He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd  
*Evil*; but what will be the *good* He gives?  
 Were I the victor, *His* works would be deem'd  
 The only evil ones. And you, ye new  
 And scarce-born mortals, what have been *His* gifts  
 To you already, in your little world?

CAIN. But few, and some of those but bitter.

LUCIFER. Back  
 With me, then, on thine earth, and try the rest  
 Of *His* celestial boons to you and yours.  
 Evil and good are things in their own essence,  
 And not made good or evil by the giver;  
 But if He gives you good—so call Him; if  
 Evil springs from *Him*, do not name it *mine*,  
 Till ye know better its true fount; and judge  
 Not by words, though of spirits, but the fruits  
 Of your existence, such as it must be.  
*One good* gift has the fatal apple given—  
 Your *reason*:—let it not be over-sway'd  
 By tyrannous threats to force you into faith  
 'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:  
 Think and endure—and form an inner world  
 In your own bosom—where the outward fails;  
 So shall you nearer be the spiritual  
 Nature, and war triumphant with your own.

[*They disappear.*]

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Earth near Eden, as in Act I.*

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

ADAH. Hush! tread softly, Cain.

CAIN. I will; but wherefore?

ADAH. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed

Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

CAIN. Cypress! 'tis

A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourn'd

O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it

For our child's canopy?

ADAH. Because its branches  
 Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seem'd

Fitting to shadow slumber.

CAIN. Ay, the last—  
 And longest; but no matter—lead me to him. [*They go up to the child.*]

How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,  
 In their pure incarnation, vying with  
 The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

ADAH. And his lips, too,  
 How beautifully parted! No; you shall not

Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake soon—

His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;  
 But it were pity to disturb him till 'Tis closed.

CAIN. You have said well; I will contain

My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps!—Sleep on

And smile, thou little, young inheritor  
 Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile!

Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering

And innocent! *thou* hast not pluck'd the fruit—

Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the time

Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,

Which were not mine nor thine? But now sleep on!

His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,

And shining lids are trembling o'er his  
 long  
 Lashes, dark as the cypress which  
 waves o'er them;  
 Half open, from beneath them the clear  
 blue  
 Laughs out, although in slumber. He  
 must dream—

Of what? Of Paradise!—Ay! dream  
 of it,

My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream;  
 For never more thyself, thy sons, nor  
 fathers,  
 Shall walk in that forbidden place of  
 joy!

ADAH. Dear Cain! Nay, do not  
 whisper o'er our son  
 Such melancholy yearnings o'er the  
 past:

Why wilt thou always mourn for Para-  
 dise?

Can we not make another?

CAIN. Where?  
 ADAH. Here, or  
 Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art  
 I feel not

The want of this so much-regretted  
 Eden.

Have I not thee, our boy, our sire and  
 brother,

And Zillah—our sweet sister, and our  
 Eve,

To whom we owe so much besides our  
 birth?

CAIN. Yes—death, too, is amongst the  
 debts we owe her.

ADAH. Cain! that proud spirit, who  
 withdrew thee hence,  
 Hath sadden'd thine still deeper. I had  
 hoped

The promised wonders which thou hast  
 beheld,

Visions, thou say'st, of past and present  
 worlds,

Would have composed thy mind into  
 the calm

Of a contented knowledge; but I see  
 Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I  
 thank him,

And can forgive him all, that he so soon  
 Hath given thee back to us.

CAIN. So soon?

ADAH. 'Tis scarcely  
 Two hours since ye departed; two *long*  
 hours

To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.

CAIN. And yet I have approach'd that  
 sun, and seen

Worlds which he once shone on, and  
 never more

Shall light; and worlds he never lit:  
 methought

Years had roll'd o'er my absence.

ADAH. Hardly hours.

CAIN. The mind, then, hath capacity  
 of time,

And measures it by that which it be-  
 holds,

Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.

I had beheld the immemorial works  
 Of endless beings; skirt'd extinguish'd  
 worlds;

And, gazing on eternity, methought  
 I had borrow'd more by a few drops of  
 ages

From its immensity; but now I feel  
 My littleness again. Well said the  
 spirit,

That I was nothing!

ADAH. Wherefore said he so?  
 Jehovah said not that.

CAIN. No; *He* contents Him  
 With making us the *nothing* which we  
 are;

And after flattering dust with glimpses  
 of

Eden and Immortality, resolves

It back to dust again—for what?

ADAH. Thou know'st—  
 Even for our parents' error.

CAIN. What is that  
 To us? *they* sinn'd, then *let them* die!

ADAH. Thou hast not spoken well, nor  
 is that thought

Thy own, but of the spirit who was with  
 thee.

Would *I* could die for them, so *they*  
 might live!

CAIN. Why, so say I—provided that  
 one victim

Might satiate the insatiable of life,  
 And that our little rosy sleeper there  
 Might never taste of death nor human  
 sorrow,

Nor hand it down to those who spring  
 from him.

ADAH. How know we that some such  
 atonement one day  
 May not redeem our race?

*Cain.* By sacrificing  
The harmless for the guilty? What  
atonement  
Were there? Why, *we* are innocent:  
what have we  
Done, that we must be victims for a  
deed  
Before our birth, or need have vic-  
tims to  
Atone for this mysterious, nameless  
sin—  
If it be such a sin to seek for knowl-  
edge?

ADAH. Alas! thou sinnest now, my  
Cain: thy words  
Sound impious in mine ears.

CAIN. Then leave me!  
ADAH. Never,  
Though thy God left thee.

CAIN. Say, what have we here?  
ADAH. Two altars, which our brother  
Abel made  
During thine absence, whereupon to of-  
fer  
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

CAIN. And how knew *he* that *I* would  
be so ready  
With the burnt-offerings, which he  
daily brings  
With a meek brow, whose base humility  
Shows more of fear than worship, as  
a bribe  
To the Creator?

ADAH. Surely, 'tis well done.  
CAIN. One altar may suffice; I have no  
offering.

ADAH. The fruits of the earth, the  
early beautiful  
Blossoms and bud, and bloom of flowers  
and fruits,

These are a goodly offering to the Lord,  
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.  
CAIN. I have toil'd, and till'd, and  
sweaten in the sun,

According to the curse:—must I do  
more?

For what should I be gentle? for a  
war

With all the elements ere they will  
yield

The bread we eat? For what must I  
be grateful?

For being dust, and grovelling in the  
dust,

Till I return to dust? If I am noth-  
ing—

For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,  
And seem well pleased with pain? For  
what should I

Be contrite? for my father's sin, al-  
ready

Expiate with what we all have under-  
gone,

And to be more than expiated by  
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.

Little deems our young blooming sleep-  
er there,

The germs of an eternal misery  
To myriads is within him! Better  
'twere

I snatch'd him in his sleep, and dash'd  
him 'gainst

The rocks, than let him live to—

ADAH. Oh, my God!  
Touch not the child—my child! *thy*  
child! O Cain!

CAIN. Fear not! for all the stars, and  
all the power

Which sways them, I would not accost  
yon infant

With ruder greeting than a father's  
kiss.

ADAH. Then why so awful in thy  
speech?

CAIN. I said  
'Twere better that he ceased to live,  
than give

Life to so much of sorrow as he must  
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but  
since

That saying jars you, let us only say—  
'Twere better that he never had been  
born,

ADAH. Oh, do not say so! Where  
were then the joys,

The mother's joys of watching, nour-  
ishing,

And loving him? Soft! he awakes.  
Sweet Enoch! [*She goes to the*  
*child.*]

O Cain! look on him; see how full of  
life,

Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and  
of joy,

How like to me—how like to thee, when  
gentle,

For *then* we are *all* alike: is't not so,  
Cain?



Mother, and sire, and son, our features  
are

Reflected in each other; as they are  
In the clear waters, when *they* are  
*gentle*, and

When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then,  
my Cain!

And love thyself for our sakes, for we  
love thee.

Look! how he laughs and stretches out  
his arms,

And opens wide his blue eyes upon  
thine,

To hail his father; while his little form  
Flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not  
of pain!

The childless cherubs well might envy  
thee

The pleasures of a parent! Bless him,  
Cain!

As yet he hath no words to thank thee,  
but

His heart will, and thine own too.

CAIN. Bless thee, boy!  
If that a mortal blessing may avail  
thee,

To save thee from the serpent's curse!

ADAH. It shall.  
Surely a father's blessing may avert  
A reptile's subtlety.

CAIN. Of that I doubt;

But bless him ne'er the less.

ADAH. Our brother comes.

CAIN. Thy brother Abel.

*Enter ABEL.*

ABEL. Welcome, Cain! My brother,  
The peace of God be on thee!

CAIN. Abel, hail!

ABEL. Our sister tells me that thou  
hast been wandering,  
In high communion with a spirit, far  
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of  
those

We have seen and spoken with, like  
to our father?

CAIN. No.

ABEL. Why then commune with him?  
he may be

A foe to the Most High.

CAIN. And friend to man.

Has the Most High been so—if so you  
term Him?

ABEL. *Term Him!*—your words are  
strange today, my brother.

My sister Adah, leave us for awhile—  
We mean to sacrifice.

ADAH. Farewell, my Cain;  
But first embrace thy son. May his  
soft spirit,

And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee  
To peace and holiness!

*[Exit ADAH, with her child.]*

ABEL. Where hast thou been?

CAIN. I know not.

ABEL. Nor what thou hast seen?

CAIN. The dead,  
The immortal, the unbounded, the om-  
nipotent,

The overpowering mysteries of space—  
The innumerable worlds that were and  
are—

A whirlwind of such overwhelming  
things,

Suns, moons, and earth, upon their  
loud-voiced spheres,

Singing in thunder round me, as have  
made me

Unfit for mortal converse: leave me,  
Abel.

ABEL. Thine eyes are flashing with un-  
natural light,—

Thy cheek is flush'd with an unnatural  
hue,—

Thy words are fraught with an un-  
natural sound:—

What may this mean?

CAIN. It means—I pray thee, leave  
me.

ABEL. Not till we have pray'd and  
sacrificed together.

CAIN. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice  
alone—

Jehovah loves thee well.

ABEL. *Both* well, I hope.

CAIN. But thee the better: I care not  
for that.

Thou art fitter for his worship than I  
am:

Revere Him, then—but let it be alone—  
At least without me.

ABEL. Brother, I should ill  
Deserve the name of our great father's  
son,

If, as my elder, I revered thee not,  
And in the worship of our God call'd  
not

On thee to join me, and precede me in  
Our priesthood—'tis thy place.

CAIN. But I have ne'er  
Asserted it.

ABEL. The more my grief; I pray thee  
To do so now: thy soul seems labour-  
ing in

Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.

CAIN. No;  
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!*  
say I? Never

Knew I what calm was in the soul,  
although

I have seen the elements still'd. My  
Abel, leave me!

Or let me leave thee to thy pious pur-  
pose.

ABEL. Neither: we must perform our  
task together.

Spurn me not.

CAIN. If it must be so—well, then,  
What shall I do!

ABEL. Choose one of those two altars.

CAIN. Choose for me; they to me are  
so much turf

And stone.

ABEL. Choose thou!

CAIN. I have chosen.

ABEL. 'Tis the highest,  
And suits thee, as the elder. Now pre-  
pare

Thine offerings.

CAIN. Where are thine?

ABEL. Behold them here—  
The firstlings of the flock, and fat  
thereof—

A shepherd's humble offering.

CAIN. I have no flocks;  
I am a tiller of the ground, and must  
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its  
fruit;

[*He gathers fruits.*]  
Behold them in their various bloom and  
ripeness.

[*They dress their altars, and kindle  
a flame upon them.*]

ABEL. My brother, as the elder, offer  
first

Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacri-  
fice.

CAIN. No—I am new to this; lead  
thou the way,

And I will follow—as I may.

ABEL. [*kneeling*]. O God!  
Who made us, and who breathed the  
breath of life

Within our nostrils, who hath blessed  
us,

And spared, despite our father's sin, to  
make

His children all lost, as they might  
have been,

Had not Thy justice been so temper'd  
with

The mercy which is Thy delight, as to  
Accord a pardon like a Paradise,

Compared with our great crimes: Sole  
Lord of light!

Of good, and glory, and eternity;

Without whom all were evil, and with  
whom

Nothing can err, except to some good  
end

Of Thine omnipotent benovelence—

Inscrutable, but still to be fulfill'd—

Accept from out thy humble first of  
shepherds'

First of the first-born flocks—an offer-  
ing,

In itself nothing—as what offering can  
be

Aught unto Thee?—but yet accept it for  
The thanksgiving of him who spreads  
it in

The face of Thy high heaven, bowing  
his own

Even to the dust, of which he is, in  
honour

Of Thee, and of Thy name, for ever-  
more!

CAIN [*standing erect during this  
speech.*]

Spirit! whate'er or whatsoe'er Thou  
art,

Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,  
Shown in the exemption of Thy deeds  
from evil;

Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!  
And it may be with other names, be-  
cause

Thine attributes seem many, as Thy  
works:—

If Thou must be propitiated with  
prayers,

Take them! If Thou must be induced  
with altars,

And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive  
them!

Two beings here erect them unto Thee.

If Thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's  
shrine, which smokes

On my right hand, hath shed it for  
Thy service

In the first of his flock, whose limbs  
now reek  
In sanguinary incense to Thy skies;  
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of  
earth,  
And milder seasons, which the unstain'd  
turf

I spread them on now offers in the face  
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them,  
may seem

Good to Thee, inasmuch as they have  
not

Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form  
A sample of Thy works, than supplica-  
tion

To look on ours! If a shrine without  
victim,

And altar without gore, may win Thy  
favour,

Look on it! And for him who dresseth  
it,

He is—such as Thou mad'st him; and  
seeks nothing

Which must be won by kneeling: if  
he's evil,

Strike him! Thou art omnipotent, and  
may'st—

For what can he oppose? If he be good,  
Strike him, or spare him, as Thou wilt!  
since all

Rests upon Thee, and good and evil  
seem

To have no power themselves, save in  
Thy will;

And whether that be good or ill I know  
not,

Nor being omnipotent, nor fit to judge  
Omnipotence, but merely to endure

Its mandate; which thus far I have en-  
dured.

[*The fire upon the altar of ABEL  
kindles into a column of the  
brightest flame, and ascends to  
heaven; while a whirlwind throws  
down the altar of CAIN, and  
scatters the fruits abroad upon  
the earth.*]

ABEL [*kneeling*]. Oh, brother, pray!  
Jehovah's wroth with thee.

CAIN. Why so?

ABEL. The fruits are scatter'd on the  
earth.

CAIN. From earth they came, to earth  
let them return;

Their seed will bear fresh fruit there  
ere the summer;

Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers bet-  
ter; see

How heaven licks up the flames, when  
thick with blood!

ABEL. Think not upon my offering's  
acceptance,

But make another of thine own before  
It is too late.

CAIN. I will build no more altars,  
Nor suffer any—

ABEL [*rising*]. Cain! what meanest  
thou?

CAIN. To cast down yon vile flatterer  
of the clouds,

The smoky harbinger of thy dull  
prayers—

Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and  
kids,

Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd  
in blood.

ABEL [*opposing him*]. Thou shalt  
not!—add not impious works to  
impious

Words! let that altar stand—'tis hal-  
low'd now

By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,  
In His acceptance of the victims.

CAIN. *His!*  
*His pleasure!* what was his high pleas-  
ure in

The fumes of scorching flesh and smok-  
ing blood,

To the pain of the bleating mothers,  
which

Still yearn for their dead offspring? or  
the pangs

Of the sad ignorant victims underneath  
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody

record  
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame  
creation!

ABEL. Brother, give back! thou shalt  
not touch my altar

With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it  
To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine.

CAIN. Another sacrifice! Give way, or  
else

That sacrifice may be—  
ABEL. What mean'st thou?

CAIN. Give—  
Give way! thy God loves blood!—then  
look to it:—

Give way, ere He hath *more!*

ABEL. In *His* great name.  
I stand between thee and the shrine  
which hath  
Had His acceptance.

CAIN. If thou lov'st thyself,  
Stand back till I have strew'd this turf  
along

Its native soil:—else—

ABEL [*opposing him*]. I love God far  
more  
Than life.

CAIN [*striking him with a brand on  
the temples, which he snatches  
from the altar*].

Then take thy life unto thy God,  
Since He loves lives.

ABEL [*falls*]. What hast thou done,  
my brother?

CAIN. Brother!

ABEL. O God! receive Thy servant,  
and

Forgive his slayer, for he knew not  
what

He did—Cain, give me—give me thy  
hand; and tell

Poor Zillah—

CAIN [*after a moment's stupefaction*].  
My hand! 'tis all red, and with—

What? [*A long pause.—Looking slowly  
round.*] Where am I? alone!

Where's Abel! where

Cain? Can it be that I am he? My  
brother,

Awake!—why liest thou so on the  
green earth?

'Tis not the hour of slumber:—why so  
pale?

What, hast thou!—thou wert full of  
life this morn!

Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I  
smote

Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why  
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is  
mockery,

And only done to daunt me:—'twas a  
blow,—

And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only  
stir!

Why, so—that's well!—thou breath'st!  
breathe upon me!

O God! O God!

ABEL [*very faintly*]. What's he who  
speaks of God?

CAIN. Thy murderer.

ABEL. Then may God forgive him!

Cain,

Comfort poor Zillah: she has but one  
brother

Now.

[*ABEL dies.*]

CAIN. And I none!—Who makes me  
brotherless?

His eyes are open! then he is not dead!  
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts

down our lids.

His lips, too, are apart; why, then, he  
breathes!

And yet I feel it not. His heart!—his  
heart!

Let me see, doth it beat? methinks—  
No!—no!

This is a vision, else I am become  
The native of another and worse world.

The earth swims round me: what is  
this?—'tis wet;

[*Puts his hand to his brow, and then  
looks at it.*]

And yet there are no dew! 'Tis blood  
—my blood—

My brother's and my own; and shed  
by me!

Then what have I further to do with  
life,

Since I have taken life from my own  
flesh?

But he cannot be dead!—Is silence  
death?

No; he will wake: then let me watch  
by him.

Life cannot be so slight, as to be  
quenched

Thus quickly!—He hath spoken to me  
since—

What shall I say to him?—My brother!  
—No:

He will not answer to that name; for  
brethren

Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak  
to me!

Oh for a word more of that gentle  
voice,

That I may bear to hear my own again!

*Enter ZILLAH.*

ZILLAH. I heard a heavy sound; what  
can it be?

'Tis Cain; and watching by my hus-  
band. What

Dost thou there, brother? Doth he  
sleep? Oh, heaven!

What means this paleness, and yon stream?—No, no!

It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?

Abel! what's this?—who hath done this? He moves not;

He breathes not: and his hands drop down from mine

With stony lifelessness? Ah, cruel Cain!

Why cam'st thou not in time to save him from

This violence? Whatever hath assail'd him,

Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have stepp'd in

Between him and aggression! Father!—Eve!—

Adah!—come hither! Death is in the world! [*Exit ZILLAH, calling on her parents, etc.*]

CAIN [*solus*]. And who hath brought him there?—I—who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought

Empoison'd all my life, before I knew His aspect—I have led him here, and given

My brother to his cold and still embrace,

As if he would not have asserted his Inexorable claim without my aid.

I am awake at last—a dreary dream Had madden'd me;—but *he* shall ne'er awake.

*Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.*

ADAM. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here.—

What do I see?—'Tis true!—My son!—my son!

Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine! [*To EVE.*]

EVE. Oh! speak not of it now: the serpent's fangs

Are in my heart. My best belovèd, Abel!

Jehovah! this is punishment beyond A mother's sin, to take *him* from me!

ADAM. Who

Or what hath done this deed?—Speak, Cain, since thou

Wert present; was it some more hostile angel,

Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild

Brute of the forest?

EVE. Ah! a livid light Breaks through, as from a thunder-

cloud! Yon brand

Massy and bloody, snatch'd from off the altar,

And black with smoke, and red with—

ADAM. Speak, my son!

Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,

That we are not more miserable still.

ADAH. Speak, Cain! and say it was not *thou*!

EVE. It was.

I see it now—he hangs his guilty head, And covers his ferocious eyes with

hands

Incarnadine.

ADAH. Mother, thou dost him wrong—Cain! clear thee from this horrible ac-

cusel,

Which grief wrings from our parent.

EVE. Hear, Jehovah!

May the eternal serpent's curse be on him!

For he was fitter for his seed than ours.

May all his days be desolate! May—

ADAH. Hold!

Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son—

Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,

And my betroth'd.

EVE. He hath left thee no brother—Zillah no husband—me *no son*!—for

thus

I curse him from my sight for ever—more!

All bonds I break between us, as he broke

That of his nature, in yon—O death!

Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incurr'd thee?

Why dost thou not so now?

ADAM. Eve! let not this,

Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!

A heavy doom was long forespoken to us;

And now that it begins, let it be borne

In such sort as may show our God,

that we

Are faithful servants to His holy will.



EVE [*pointing to CAIN*]. *His will!* the will of yon incarnate spirit  
 Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth  
 To strew it with the dead. May all the curses  
 Of life be on him! and his agonies Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us  
 From Eden, till his children do by him As he did by his brother! May the swords  
 And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him By day and night—snakes spring up in his path—  
 Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves  
 On which he lays his head to sleep be strew'd  
 With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim!  
 His waking a continual dread of death! May the clear rivers turn to blood, as he Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!  
 May every element shun or change to him!  
 May he live in the pangs which others die with!  
 And death itself wax something worse than death  
 To him who first acquainted him with man!  
 Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is *Cain*,  
 Through all the coming myriads of mankind,  
 Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire!  
 May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods  
 Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust  
 A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God. [*Exit EVE.*]  
*Adam.* Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together.  
 Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am Henceforth alone—we never must meet more.  
*ADAH.* Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do not  
 Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

*ADAM.* I curse him not: his spirit be his curse. Come, Zillah!  
*ZILLAH.* I must watch my husband's corse.  
*ADAM.* We will return again, when he is gone  
 Who hath provided for us this dread office.  
 Come, Zillah!  
*ZILLAH.* Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,  
 And those lips once so warm—my heart! my heart!  
 [*Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH weeping.*]  
*ADAH.* Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I am ready,  
 So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,  
 And you his sister. Ere the sun declines  
 Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness Under the cloud of night.—Nay, speak to me,  
 To me—*thine own.*  
*CAIN.* Leave me!  
*ADAH.* Why, all have left thee.  
*CAIN.* And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not fear  
 To dwell with one who hath done this? *ADAH.* I fear  
 Nothing except to leave thee, much as I Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.  
 I must not speak of this—it is between thee  
 And the great God.  
*A Voice from within exclaims, Cain!*  
*ADAH.* Hear'st thou that voice? *The Voice within.* Cain! Cain!  
*ADAH.* It soundeth like an angel's tone.  
  
*Enter the ANGEL of the LORD.*  
  
*ANGEL.* Where is thy brother Abel?  
*CAIN.* Am I then My brother's keeper?  
*ANGEL.* Cain! what hast thou done? The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,  
 Even from the ground, unto the Lord! —Now art thou  
 Cursed from the earth, which open'd late her mouth

To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.

Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not

Yield thee her strength: a fugitive shalt thou

Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

ADAH. This punishment is more than he can bear.

Behold, thou driv'st him from the face of earth,

And from the face of God shall he be hid

A fugitive and vagabond on earth.

'Twill come to pass, that whoso findeth him

Shall slay him.

CAIN. Would they could! but who are they

Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth

As yet unpeopled?

ANGEL. Thou hast slain thy brother, And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

ADAH. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say

That this poor aching breast now nourishes

A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

ANGEL. Then he would but be what his father is.

Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment To him thou now seest so besmear'd with blood?

The fratricide might well engender parricides.—

But it shall not be so—the Lord thy God

And mine commandeth me to set His seal

On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.

Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall

Be taken on his head. Come hither!

CAIN. What

Wouldst thou with me?

ANGEL. To mark upon thy brow Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

CAIN. No, let me die!

ANGEL. It must not be.  
[The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN's brow.]

CAIN. It burns  
My brow, but nought to that which is within it.

Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

ANGEL. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the womb.

As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he

Thou slowest was gentle as the flocks he tended.

CAIN. After the fall too soon was I begotten;

Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from The serpent, and my sire still mourn'd for Eden.

That which I am, I am; I did not seek For life, nor did I make myself; but could I

With my own death redeem him from the dust—

And why not so? Let him return to-day,

And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored By God the life to him He loved; and taken

From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

ANGEL. Who shall heal murder? what is done is done:

Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds

Unlike the last! [The ANGEL disappears.]

ADAH. He's gone, let us go forth; I hear our little Enoch cry within Our bower.

CAIN. Ah! little knows he what he weeps for!

And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears!

But the four rivers would not cleanse my soul.\*

Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?

ADAH. If I thought that he would not, I would—

\*Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates.—Gen. ii, 11-14. The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden, and consequently the only waters with which Cain was acquainted upon earth.

CAIN [*interrupting her*]. No,

No more of threats: we have had too many of them:

Go to our children; I will follow thee.

ADAH. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead;

Let us depart together.

CAIN. Oh! thou dead

And everlasting witness! whose unsinking

Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou *now* art

I know not; but if *thou* seest what *I* am, I think thou wilt forgive him whom his God

Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—Farewell!

I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.

I' who sprang from the same womb with thee, drain'd

The same breast, clasp'd thee often to my own,

In fondness brotherly and boyish, I Can never meet thee more, nor even dare

To do that for thee which thou shouldst have done

For me—compose thy limbs into their grave—

The first grave yet dug for mortality. But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!

For all the fruits thou hast render'd to me, I

Give thee back this.—Now for the wilderness!

[ADAH *stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.*]

ADAH. A dreary and an early doom, my brother,

Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,

I alone must not weep. My office is Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;

But yet, of all who mourn, none mourn like me,

Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.

Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

CAIN. Eastward from Eden will we take our way:

'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps.

ADAH. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our God

Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

CAIN. And he who lieth there was childless. I

Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,

Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,

And might have temper'd this stern blood of mine,

Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!

O Abel!

ADAH. Peace be with him!

CAIN. But with *me*!—  
[*Exeunt.*]

LORD BYRON (1788-1824).



HEAVEN AND EARTH  
A MYSTERY





# HEAVEN AND EARTH:

## A MYSTERY

Founded on the following passage in Genesis, Chap. VI.: 'And it came to pass . . . that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.'

*'And woman waiting for her demon lover.'*—COLERIDGE.

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

*Angels*—SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, RAPHAEL  
THE ARCHANGEL.

*Men*—NOAH and his sons, IRAD,  
JAPHET.

*Women*—ANAH, AHOLIBAMAH.

*Chorus of Spirits of the Earth.*—  
*Chorus of Mortals.*

### PART I.

SCENE I.—*A woody and mountainous district near Mount Ararat.—Time, Midnight.*

[*Enter ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.*]

ANAH. Our father sleeps: it is the hour when they

Who love us are accustom'd to descend  
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky  
Ararat:—

How my heart beats!

AHO. Let us proceed upon  
Our invocation.

ANAH. But the stars are hidden.  
I tremble.

AHO. So do I, but not with fear  
Of aught save their delay.

ANAH. My sister, though  
I love Azazel more than—oh, too much!  
What was I going to say? my heart  
grows impious.

AHO. And where is the impiety of  
loving  
Celestial natures?

ANAH. But Aholibamah,  
I love our God less since his angel  
loved me:

This cannot be of good; and though  
I know not  
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand  
fears

Which are not ominous of right.

AHO. Then wed thee  
Unto some son of clay, and toil and  
spin!

There's Japhet loves thee well, hath  
loved thee long:

Marry, and bring forth dust!

ANAH. I should have loved  
Azazel not less were he mortal; yet  
I am glad he is not. I cannot outlive  
him.

And when I think that his immortal  
wings

Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre  
Of the poor child of clay which so  
adored him,

As he adores the Highest, death be-  
comes

Less terrible; but yet I pity him:  
His grief will be of ages, or at least  
Mine would be such for him, were I  
the seraph,

And he the perishable.

AHO. Rather say,  
That he will single forth some other  
daughter

Of earth, and love her as he once  
loved Anah.

ANAH. And if it should be so, and  
she loved him,  
Better thus than that he should weep  
for me.

AHO. If I thought thus of Samiasa's  
love,  
All seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from  
me.

But to our invocation!—'Tis the hour.  
ANAH. Seraph!

From thy sphere!  
Whatever star contain thy glory;  
In the eternal depths of heaven  
Albeit thou watchest with 'the seven.\*  
Though through space infinite and hoary  
Before thy bright wings worlds be  
driven,

Yet hear!

Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!  
And though she nothing is to thee,  
Yet think that thou art all to her.

Thou canst not tell,—and never be  
Such pangs decreed to aught save  
me,—

The bitterness of tears.

Eternity is in thine years,  
Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;  
With me thou canst not sympathize,  
Except in love, and there thou must  
'Acknowledge that more loving dust  
Ne'er wept beneath the skies.

Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou  
see'st

The face of him who made thee great,  
As he hath made me of the least

Of those cast out from Eden's gate;  
Yet, Seraph dear!

Oh hear!

For thou hast loved me, and I would  
not die

Until I know what I must die in  
knowing,

That thou forgett'st in thine eternity  
Her whose heart death could not  
keep from o'erflowing

For thee, immortal essence as thou art!  
Great is their love who love in sin  
and fear;

And such, I feel, are waging in my  
heart

A war unworthy: to an Adamite  
Forgive, my Seraph! that such  
thoughts appear,

For sorrow is our element;  
Delight

An Eden kept afar from sight,  
Though sometimes with our visions  
blent.

*\*The archangels, said to be seven in  
number and to occupy the eighth rank  
in the celestial hierarchy.*

The hour is near  
Which tells me we are not abandon'd  
quite.—

Appear! Appear!

Seraph!

My own Azazel! be but here,  
And leave the stars to their own light.  
АНО. Samiasa!

Wheresoe'er

Thou rulest in the upper air—

Or warring with the spirits who  
may dare

Dispute with him

Who made all empires, empire; or re-  
calling

Some wandering star, which shoots  
through the abyss,

Whose tenants dying, while their  
world is falling,

Share the dim destiny of clay in this;  
Or joining with the inferior cherubim,  
Thou deignest to partake their hymn—  
Samiasa!

I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.  
Many may worship thee, that will I  
not:

If that thy spirit down to mine may  
move thee,

Descend and share my lot!

Though I be form'd of clay,

And thou of beams

More bright than those of day

On Eden's streams,

Thine immortality cannot repay

With love more warm than mine

My love. There is a ray

In me, which, though forbidden yet  
to shine,

I feel was lighted at thy God's and  
thine.

It may be hidden long: death and de-  
cay

Our mother Eve bequeath'd us—but  
my heart

Defies it: though this life must pass  
away,

Is *that* a cause for thee and me to  
part?

Thou art immortal—so am I: I feel—  
I feel my immortality o'ersweep

All pains, all tears, all time, all fears,  
and peal,

Like the eternal thunders of the deep,  
Into my ears this truth—'Thou liv'st  
for ever!'

But if it be in joy  
I know not, nor would know;  
That secret rests with the Almighty  
giver,  
Who folds in clouds the founts of bliss  
and woe.

But thee and me he never can de-  
stroy;  
Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm;  
we are

Of an eternal essence, and must war  
With him if he will war with us:  
with *thee*

I can share all things, even im-  
mortal sorrow;  
For thou hast ventured to share life  
with *me*.

And shall *I* shrink from thine eter-  
nity?

No! though the serpent's sting  
should pierce me through,  
And thou thyself wert like the serpent,  
coil

Around me still! and I will smile,  
And curse thee not; but hold  
Thee in as warm a fold  
As — but descend, and prove  
A mortal's love

For an immortal. If the skies contain  
More joy than thou canst give and take,  
remain!

ANAH. Sister! sister! I view them  
winging  
Their bright way through the parted  
night.

AHO. The clouds from off their pin-  
ions flinging,  
As though they bore to-morrow's light.

ANAH. But if our father see the  
sight!

AHO. He would but deem it was the  
moon

Rising unto some sorcerer's tune  
An hour too soon.

ANAH. They come! *he* comes!—  
Azaziel!

AHO. Haste  
To meet them! Oh! for wings to bear  
My spirit, while they hover there,  
To Samiasa's breast!

ANAH. Lo! they have kindled all the  
west,  
Like a returning sunset;—lo!  
On Ararat's late secret crest

A mild and many-colour'd bow,  
The remnant of their flashing path,  
Now shines! and now, behold! it hath  
Return'd to night, as rippling foam,  
Which the leviathan hath lash'd  
From his unfathomable home,  
When sporting on the face of the calm  
deep,

Subsides soon after he again hath  
dash'd  
Down, down, to where the ocean's foun-  
tains sleep.

AHO. They have touch'd earth! Sami-  
iasa!

ANAH. My Azaziel!  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*Enter IRAD and JAPHET.*

IRAD. Despond not: wherefore wilt  
thou wander thus

To add thy silence to the silent night,  
And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?  
They cannot aid thee.

JAPH. But they soothe me—now  
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.  
Methinks a being that is beautiful  
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty.  
The eternal beauty of undying things.  
Oh, Anah!

IRAD. But she loves thee not.

JAPH. Alas!

IRAD. And proud Aholibamah spurns  
me also.

JAPH. I feel for thee, too.

IRAD. Let her keep her pride,  
Mine hath enabled me to bear her  
scorn;

It may be, time, too, will avenge it.

JAPH. Canst thou  
Find joy in such a thought?

IRAD. Nor joy nor sorrow.  
I loved her well; I would have loved  
her better,

Had love been met with love: as 'tis,  
I leave her

To brighter destinies, if so she deems  
them.

JAPH. What destinies?

IRAD. I have some cause to think  
She loves another.

JAPH. Anah!

IRAD. No; her sister.

JAPH. What other?

IRAD. That I know not; but her air,  
If not her words, tells me she loves  
another.

JAPH. Ay, but not Anah: she but  
loves her God.

IRAD. Whate'er she loveth, so she  
loves thee not,

What can it profit thee?

JAPH. True, nothing; but I  
love.

IRAD. And so did I.

JAPH. And now thou lov'st not,  
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou  
happier?

IRAD. Yes.

JAPH. I pity thee.

IRAD. Me! why?

JAPH. For being happy,  
Deprived of that which makes my mis-  
ery.

IRAD. I take thy taunt as part of thy  
distemper,

And would not feel as thou dost for  
more shekels

Than all our father's herds would bring,  
if weigh'd

Against the metal of the sons of Cain—  
The yellow dust they try to barter with  
us,

As if such useless and discolour'd  
trash,

The refuse of the earth, could be re-  
ceived

For milk, and wool, and flesh, and  
fruits, and all

Our flocks and wilderness afford.—Go,  
Japhet,

Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the  
moon—

I must back to my rest.

JAPH. And so would I  
If I could rest.

IRAD. Thou wilt not to our tents then?

JAPH. No, Irad; I will to the cavern,  
whose

Mouth they say opens from the internal  
world

To let the inner spirits of the earth

Forth when they walk its surface.

IRAD. Wherefore so?

What wouldst thou there?

JAPH. Soothe further my sad spirit  
With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless  
spot,

And I am hopeless.

IRAD. But 'tis dangerous;  
Strange sounds and sights have peo-  
pled it with terrors.

I must go with thee.

JAPH. Irad, no; believe me  
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.

IRAD. But evil things will be thy foe  
the more

As not being of them: turn thy steps  
aside,

Or let mine be with thine.

JAPH. No, neither, Irad;  
I must proceed alone.

IRAD. Then peace be with thee!  
[Exit IRAD.]

JAPH. [solus]. Peace! I have sought  
it where it should be found,

In love—with love, too, which perhaps  
deserved it;

And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart,  
A weakness of the spirit,—listless days,

And nights inexorable to sweet sleep—  
Have come upon me. Peace! what

peace? the calm

Of desolation, and the stillness of  
The untrodden forest, only broken by

The sweeping tempest through its  
groaning boughs;

Such is the sullen or the fitful state  
Of my mind overworn. The earth's

grown wicked,

And many signs and portents have pro-  
claim'd

A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming  
doom

To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!  
When the dread hour denounced shall

open wide

The fountains of the deep, how might-  
est thou

Have lain within this bosom, folded  
from

The elements; this bosom, which in  
vain

Hath beat for thee, and then will beat  
more vainly,

While thine—Oh, God! at least remit  
to her

Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the  
failing

As a star in the clouds, which cannot  
quench,

Although they obscure it for an hour.  
My Anah!



How would I have adored thee, but thou  
wouldst not;  
And still would I redeem thee—see thee  
live  
When ocean is earth's grave, and, unop-  
posed  
By rock or shallow, the leviathan,  
Lord of the shoreless sea and watery  
world,  
Shall wonder at his boundlessness of  
realm.

[Exit JAPHET.]

*Enter NOAH and SHEM.*

NOAH. Where is thy brother Japhet?

SHEM. He went forth,  
According to his wont, to meet with  
Irak,  
He said; but, as I fear, to bend his  
steps

Towards Anah's tents, round which he  
hovers nightly,  
Like a dove round and round its pil-  
laged nest;

Or else he walks the wild up to the  
cavern

Which opens to the heart of Ararat.

NOAH. What doth he there? It is an  
evil spot

Upon an earth all evil; for things worse  
Than even wicked men resort there: he  
Still loves this daughter of a fated race,  
Although he could not wed her if she  
loved him,

And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy  
hearts

Of men! that one of my blood, knowing  
well

The destiny and evil of these days,  
And that the hour approacheth, should  
indulge

In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the  
way;

He must be sought for!

SHEM. Go not forward, father:  
I will seek Japhet.

NOAH. Do not fear for me:  
All evil things are powerless on the  
man

Selected by Jehovah.—Let us on.

SHEM. To the tents of the father of  
the sisters?

NOAH. No; to the cavern of the Cau-  
casus.

[*Exeunt NOAH and SHEM.*]

### SCENE III.

*The mountains.—A cavern, and the  
rocks of Caucasus.*

JAPH. [*solus*]. Ye wilds, that look  
eternal; and thou cave,  
Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye  
mountains,  
So varied and so terrible in beauty;  
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks  
And toppling trees that twine their roots  
with stone

In perpendicular places, where the foot  
Of man would tremble, could he reach  
them—

Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,  
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed,  
rent, yes, hurl'd

Before the mass of waters; and yon  
cave,

Which seems to lead into a lower world,  
Shall have its depths search'd by the  
sweeping wave,

And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!  
And man—Oh, men! my fellow-beings!

Who  
Shall weep above your universal grave,  
Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My  
kinsmen,

Alas! what am I better than ye are,  
That I must live beyond ye? Where  
shall be

The pleasant places where I thought of  
Anah,

While I had hope? or the more savage  
haunts,

Scarce less beloved, where I despair'd  
for her?

And can it be!—Shall yon exulting  
peak,

Whose glittering top is like a distant  
star,

Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?  
No more to have the morning sun break  
forth,

And scatter back the mists in floating  
folds

From its tremendous brow? no more  
to have

Day's broad orb drop behind its head  
at even,

Leaving it with a crown of many hues?  
No more to be the beacon of the world,

For angels to alight on, as the spot  
Nearest the stars? And can those words  
"no more"

Be meant for thee, for all things, save  
for us,

And the predestined creeping things re-  
served

By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May  
He preserve *them*, and I not have the  
power

To snatch the loveliest of earth's daugh-  
ters from

A doom which even some serpent, with  
his mate,

Shall 'scape to save his kind to be pro-  
long'd,

To hiss and sting through some emerg-  
ing world,

Reeking and dank from out the slime,  
whose ooze

Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this  
until

The salt morass subside into a sphere  
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,

The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,  
Of yet quick myriads of all life? How  
much

Breath will be still'd at once! All-  
beauteous world!

So young, so mark'd out for destruc-  
tion, I

With a cleft heart look on thee day by  
day,

And night by night, thy number'd days  
and nights.

I cannot save thee, cannot save even  
her

Whose love had made me love thee  
more; but as

A portion of thy dust, I cannot think  
Upon thy coming doom without a feel-  
ing

Such as—Oh God! and canst thou—  
[*He pauses.*]

*A rushing sound from the cavern is  
heard, and shouts of laughter—  
afterwards a Spirit passes.*

JAPH. In the name  
Of the Most High, what art thou?

SPIRIT [*laughs*]. Ha! ha! ha!

JAPH. By all that earth holds holiest,  
speak!

SPIRIT. [*laughs*]. Ha! ha!

JAPH. By the approaching deluge! by  
the earth

Which will be strangled by the ocean!  
by

The deep which will lay open all her  
fountains!

The heaven which will convert her  
clouds to seas,

And the Omnipotent who makes and  
crushes!

Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,  
Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to  
me!

Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh?  
SPIRIT. Why weep'st thou?

JAPH. For earth and all her children.  
SPIRIT. Ha! ha! ha!

[*Spirit vanishes.*]

JAPH. How the fiend mocks the tor-  
tures of a world,

The coming desolation of an orb,  
On which the sun shall rise and warm  
no life!

How the earth sleeps! and all that in  
it is

Sleep, too, upon the very eve of death!  
Why should they wake to meet it? What  
are here,

Which look like death in life, and speak  
like things

Born ere this dying world? They come  
like clouds!

[*Various Spirits pass from the cavern.*]  
SPIRIT. Rejoice!

The abhorred race  
Which could not keep in Eden their  
high place,

But listen'd to the voice  
Of knowledge without power,  
Are nigh the hour  
Of death!

Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor  
sorrow,

Nor years, nor heart-break, nor time's  
sapping motion,

Shall they drop off. Behold their last  
to-morrow!

Earth shall be ocean!  
And no breath,

Save of the winds, be on the unbounded  
wave

Angels shall tire their wings, but find  
no spot:

Not even a rock from out the liquid  
grave

Shall lift its point to save,  
Or show the place where strong Despair  
hath died,  
After long looking o'er the ocean wide  
For the expected ebb which cometh  
not:

All shall be void,  
Destroy'd!

Another element shall be the lord  
Of life, and the abhorr'd  
Children of dust be quenched; and of  
each hue  
Of earth nought left but the unbroken  
blue;

And of the variegated mountain  
Shall nought remain  
Unchanged, or of the level plain;  
Cedar and pine shall lift their tops  
in vain:

All merged within the universal foun-  
tain,

Man, earth, and fire, shall die,  
And sea and sky

Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.  
Upon the foam

Who shall erect a home?

JAPH. [*coming forward*]. My sire!

Earth's seed shall not expire;

Only the evil shall be put away  
From day.

Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the  
waste!

Who howl your hideous joy

When God destroys whom you dare not  
destroy;

Hence! haste!

Back to your inner caves!

Until the waves

Shall search you in your secret place,  
And drive your sullen race

Forth, to be roll'd upon the tossing  
winds,

In restless wretchedness along all  
space!

SPIRIT. Son of the saved!

When thou and thine have braved

The wide and warring element;

When the great barrier of the deep is  
rent,

Shall thou and thine be good or happy?  
—No!

Thy new world and new race shall be  
of woe—

Less goodly in their aspect, in their  
years

Less than the glorious giants,  
who

Yet walk the world in pride,  
The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal  
bride.

Thine shall be nothing of the past,  
save tears.

And art thou not ashamed

Thus to survive,

And eat, and drink, and wive?  
With a base heart so far subdued and  
tamed,

As even to hear this wide destruction  
named,

Without such grief and courage, as  
should rather

Bid thee await the world-dissolving  
wave,

Than seek a shelter with thy favour'd  
father,

And build thy city o'er the drown'd  
earth's grave?

Who would outlive their kind,  
Except the base and blind?

Mine

Hateth thine

As of a different order in the sphere,

But not our own.

There is not one who hath not left a  
throne

Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness  
here,

Rather than see his mates endure alone.

Go, wretch! and give

A life like thine to other wretches—live!  
And when the annihilating waters

roar

Above what they have done,

Envy the giant patriarchs then no  
more,

And scorn thy sire as the surviving one!  
Thyself for being his son!

*Chorus of Spirits issuing from the  
cavern.*

Rejoice!

No more the human voice

Shall vex our joys in middle air

With prayer;

No more

Shall they adore;

And we, who ne'er for ages have adored  
The prayer-exacting Lord,

To whom the omission of a sacrifice  
Is vice;

We, we shall view the deep's salt sources  
 pour  
 Until one element shall do the work  
 Of all in chaos; until they,  
 The creatures proud of their poor  
 clay,  
 Shall perish, and their bleached bones  
 shall lurk  
 In caves, in dens, in clefts of moun-  
 tains, where  
 The deep shall follow to their latest  
 lair;  
 Where even the brutes, in their despair,  
 Shall cease to prey on man and on each  
 other,  
 And the striped tiger shall lie down  
 to die  
 Beside the lamb, as though he were his  
 brother;  
 Till all things shall be as they were,  
 Silent and uncreated, save the sky:  
 While a brief truce  
 Is made with Death, who shall for-  
 bear  
 The little remnant of the past crea-  
 tion,  
 To generate new nations for his  
 use;  
 This remnant, floating o'er the undu-  
 lation  
 Of the subsiding deluge, from its  
 slime,  
 When the hot sun hath baked the reek-  
 ing soil  
 Into a world, shall give again to Time  
 New beings—years, diseases, sorrow,  
 crime—  
 With all companionship of hate and  
 toil,  
 Until—  
 JAPH *[interrupting them]*. The eter-  
 nal will  
 Shall deign to expound this dream  
 Of good and evil; and redeem  
 Unto himself all times, all  
 things;  
 And, gather'd under his al-  
 mighty wings,  
 Abolish hell!  
 And to the expiated Earth  
 Restore the beauty of her birth,  
 Her Eden in an endless paradise,  
 Where man no more can fall as  
 once he fell,

And even the very demons shall do  
 well!  
 SPIRITS. And when shall take effect  
 this wondrous spell?  
 JAPH. When the Redeemer cometh;  
 first in pain,  
 And then in glory.  
 SPIRIT. Meantime still struggle in the  
 mortal chain,  
 Till earth wax hoary:  
 War with yourselves, and hell, and  
 heaven, in vain,  
 Until the clouds look gory  
 With the blood reeking from each bat-  
 tle plain;  
 New times, new climes, new arts, new  
 men; but still,  
 The same old tears, old crimes, and old-  
 est ill,  
 Shall be amongst your race in different  
 forms;  
 But the same moral storms  
 Shall oversweep the future, as the  
 waves  
 In a few hours the glorious giants'  
 graves\*

*Chorus of Spirits.*

Brethren, rejoice!  
 Mortal, farewell!  
 Hark! hark! already we can hear the  
 voice  
 Of growing ocean's gloomy swell;  
 The winds, too, plume their piercing  
 wings;  
 The clouds have nearly fill'd their  
 springs;  
 The fountains of the great deep shall  
 be broken,  
 And heaven set wide her windows;†  
 while mankind  
 View, unacknowledged, each tremen-  
 dous token—  
 Still, as they were from the beginning,  
 blind.

\*—"And there were giants in the  
 earth in those days, and after, mighty  
 men, which were of old, men of re-  
 nown."—Genesis.

†"The same day were all the foun-  
 tains of the great deep broken up, and  
 the windows of heaven were opened."—  
 Ibid.

We hear the sound they cannot  
 hear,  
 The mustering thunders of the  
 threatening sphere;  
 Yet a few hours their coming is  
 delay'd;  
 Their flashing banners, folded still on  
 high,  
 Yet undisplay'd,  
 Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.  
 How! how! oh Earth!  
 Thy death is nearer than thy recent  
 birth;  
 Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink  
 below  
 The ocean's overflow!  
 The wave shall break upon your cliffs;  
 and shells,  
 The little shells, of ocean's least  
 things be  
 Deposed where now the eagle's offspring  
 dwells—  
 How shall he shriek o'er the remorse-  
 less sea!  
 And call his nestlings up with fruitless  
 yell,  
 Unanswer'd, save by the encroaching  
 swell;—  
 While man shall long in vain for his  
 broad wings,  
 The wings which could not save:—  
 Where could he rest them, while the  
 whole space brings  
 Nought to his eye beyond the deep,  
 his grave?  
 Brethren, rejoice!  
 And loudly lift each superhuman  
 voice—  
 All die,  
 Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed—  
 The seed of Seth,  
 Exempt for future Sorrow's sake from  
 death.  
 But of the sons of Cain  
 None shall remain;  
 And all his goodly daughters  
 Must lie beneath the desolating  
 waters;  
 Or, floating upward, with their long  
 hair laid  
 Along the wave, the cruel heaven up-  
 braid,  
 Which would not spare  
 Beings even in death so fair.  
 It is decreed,

All die!  
 And to the universal human cry  
 The universal silence shall succeed!  
 Fly, brethren, fly!  
 But still rejoice!  
 We fell!  
 They fall!  
 So perish all  
 These petty foes of Heaven who shrink  
 from hell!  
 [*The Spirits disappear, soaring up-  
 wards.*]  
 JAPH. [*solus*]. God hath proclaim'd  
 the destiny of earth;  
 My father's ark of safety hath an-  
 nounced it;  
 The very demons shriek it from their  
 caves;  
 The scroll of Enoch prophesied it long\*  
 In silent books, which, in their silence,  
 say  
 More to the mind than thunder to the  
 ear:  
 And yet men listen'd not, nor listen;  
 but  
 Walk darking to their doom; which,  
 though so nigh,  
 Shakes them no more in their dim dis-  
 belief,  
 Than their last cries shall shake the  
 Almighty purpose.  
 Or deaf obedient ocean, which fulfills it.  
 No sign yet hangs its banner in the air;  
 The clouds are few, and of their wont-  
 ed texture;  
 The sun will rise upon the earth's last  
 day  
 As on the fourth day of creation, when  
 God said unto him, "Shine!" and he  
 broke forth  
 Into the dawn, which lighted not the  
 yet  
 Uniform'd forefather of mankind—but  
 roused  
 Before the human orison the earlier  
 Made and far sweeter voices of the  
 birds,  
 Which in the open firmament of heaven  
 Have wings like angels, and like them  
 salute

\*The book of Enoch, preserved by the  
 Ethiopians, is said by them to be an-  
 terior to the flood.



Heaven first each day before the Adam-  
ites:

Their matins now draw nigh—the east  
is kindling—

And they will sing! and day will break!

Both near,

So near the awful close! For these  
must drop

Their outworn pinions on the deep; and  
day,

After the bright course of a few brief  
mornings,—

Ay, day will rise; but upon what?—a  
chaos,

Which was ere day; and which, renew'd,  
makes time

Nothing! for, without life, what are  
the hours?

No more to dust than is eternity

Unto Jehovah, who created both:

Without him, even eternity would be

A void: without man, time, as made  
for man,

Dies with man, and is swallow'd in  
that deep

Which has no fountain; as his race  
will be

Devour'd by that which drowns his in-  
fant world.—

What have we here? Shapes of both  
earth and air?

No—all of heaven, they are so beautiful.  
I cannot trace their features; but their

forms,

How lovelily they move along the side  
Of the grey mountain, scattering its

mist!

And after the swart savage spirits,  
whose

Infernal immortality pour'd forth

Their impious hymn of triumph, they  
shall be

Welcome as Eden. It may be they  
come

To tell me the reprieve of our young  
world,

For which I have so often pray'd—  
They come!

Anah! oh, God! and with her—

*Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, and*  
*AHOLIBAMAH.*

ANAH.

Japhet!

SAM.

Lo!

A son of Adam!

AZA. What doth the earth-born here,  
While all his race are slumbering?

JAPH. Angel! what  
Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst  
be on high?

AZA. Know'st thou not, or forgett'st  
thou, that a part  
Of our great function is to guard thine  
earth?

JAPH. But all good angels have for-  
saken earth,

Which is condemn'd; nay, even the evil  
fly

The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah!  
my

In vain, and long, and still to be, be-  
loved!

Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in  
those hours

When no good spirit longer lights be-  
low?

ANAH. Japhet, I cannot answer thee;  
yet, yet

Forgive me—

JAPH. May the Heaven, which soon  
no more

Will pardon, do so! for thou art great-  
ly tempted.

AHO. Back to thy tents, insulting son  
of Noah!

We know thee not.

JAPH. The hour may come when thou  
May'st know me better; and thy sister  
know

Me still the same which I have ever  
been.

SAM. Son of the patriarch, who hath  
ever been

Upright before his God, whate'er thy  
gifts,

And thy words seem of sorrow, mix'd  
with wrath,

How have Azazel, or myself, brought  
on thee

Wrong?

JAPH. Wrong! the greatest of all  
wrongs; but thou

Say'st well; though she be dust, I did  
not, could not,

Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have  
said

That word so often! but now say it,  
ne'er

To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er

Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou  
the power

To save this beautiful—*these* beautiful  
Children of Cain?

AZA. From what?

JAPH. And is it so,

That ye, too, know not? Angels! an-  
gels! ye

Have shared man's sin, and, it may be,  
now must

Partake his punishment; or, at the least,  
My sorrow.

SAM. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till  
now

To hear an Adamite speak riddles to  
me.

JAPH. And hath not the Most High  
expounded them?

Then ye are lost, as they are lost.

AHO. So be it!

If they love as they are loved, they will  
not shrink

More to be mortal, than I would to dare  
An immortality of agonies

With Samiasa!

ANAH. Sister! sister! speak not  
Thus.

AZA. Fearest thou, my Anah?

ANAH. Yes, for thee:

I would resign the greater remnant of  
This little life of mine, before one hour  
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

JAPH. It is for *him*, then! for the  
seraph thou

Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou  
hast not

Left thy God, too! for unions like to  
these,

Between a mortal and an immortal,  
cannot

Be happy or be hallow'd. We are sent  
Upon the earth to toil and die; and  
they

Are made to minister on high unto  
The Highest: but if he can *save* thee,  
soon

The hour will come in which celestial  
aid

Alone can do so.

ANAH. Ah! he speaks of death.

SAM. Of death to *us*! and those who  
are with us!

But that the man seems full of sor-  
row, I

Could smile.

JAPH. I grieve not for myself, nor  
fear;

I am safe, not for my own deserts, but  
those

Of a well-doing sire, who hath been  
found

Righteous enough to save his children.  
Would

His power was greater of redemption!  
or

That by exchanging my own life for  
hers,

Who could alone have made mine hap-  
py, she,

The last and loveliest of Cain's race,  
could share

The ark which shall receive a remnant  
of

The seed of Seth!

AHO. And dost thou think that we,  
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's,  
blood

Warm in our veins,—strong Cain! who  
was begotten

In Paradise,—would mingle with Seth's  
children?

Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's  
dotage?

No, not to save all earth, were earth in  
peril!

Our race hath always dwelt apart from  
thine

From the beginning, and shall do so  
ever.

JAPH. I did not speak to thee, Aholi-  
bamah!

Too much of the forefather whom thou  
vauntest

Has come down in that haughty blood  
which springs

From him who shed the first, and that  
a brother's!

But thou, my Anah! let me call thee  
mine,

Albeit thou art not, 'tis a word I can-  
not

Part with, although I must from thee,  
my Anah.

Thou who dost rather make me dream  
that Abel

Had left a daughter, whose pure, pious  
race

Survived in thee, so much unlike thou  
art

The rest of the stern Cainites, save in  
beauty,  
For all of them are fairest in their  
favour—

AHO. [*interrupting him*]. And wouldst  
thou have her like our father's  
foe  
In mind, in soul? If *I* partook thy  
thought,  
And dream'd that aught of *Abel* was in  
*her*!—

Get thee hence, son of Noah; thou  
makest strife.

JAPH. Offspring of Cain, thy father  
did so!

AHO. But  
He slew not Seth: and what hast thou  
to do  
With other deeds between his God and  
him?

JAPH. Thou speakest well; his God  
hath judged him, and  
I had not named his deed, but that  
thyself

Didst seem to glory in him, nor to  
shrink

From what he had done.

AHO. He was our fathers' father;  
The eldest born of man, the strongest,  
bravest,

And most enduring:—Shall I blush for  
him

From whom we had our being? Look  
upon

Our race; behold their stature and their  
beauty,

Their courage, strength, and length of  
days—

JAPH. They are number'd.

AHO. Be it so! but while yet their  
hours endure,

I glory in my brethren and our fathers.

JAPH. My sire and race but glory in  
their God,

Anah! and thou?—

ANAH. Whate'er our God decrees,  
The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,  
And will endeavour patiently to obey.

But could I dare to pray in his dread  
hour

Of universal vengeance (if such should  
be),

It would not be to live, alone exempt  
Of all my house. My sister! oh, my  
sister!

What were the world, or other worlds,  
or all

The brightest future, without the sweet  
past—

Thy love—my father's—all the life, and  
all

The things which sprang up with me,  
like the stars,

Making my dim existence radiant with  
Soft lights which were not mine? Aholi-  
bamah!

Oh! if there should be mercy—seek it,  
find it:

I abhor death, because that thou must  
die.

AHO. What, hath this dreamer, with  
his father's ark,

The bugbear he hath built to scare the  
world,

Shaken *my* sister? Are *we* not the  
loved

Of seraphs? and if we were not, must  
*we*

Cling to a son of Noah for our lives?

Rather than thus—But the enthusiast  
dreams

The worst of dreams, the fantasies en-  
gender'd

By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who  
Shall shake these solid mountains, this  
firm earth,

And bid those clouds and waters take  
a shape

Distinct from that which we and all  
our sires

Have seen them wear on their eternal  
way?

Who shall do this?

JAPH. He whose one word produced  
them.

AHO. Who *heard* that word?

JAPH. The universe, which leap'd  
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou  
still in scorn?

Turn to thy seraphs: if they attest it  
not,

They are none.

SAM. Aholibamah, own thy God!

AHO. I have ever hail'd our Maker,  
Samiasa,

As thine, and mine: a God of love, not  
sorrow.

JAPH. Alas! what else is love but sor-  
row? Even

He who made earth in love had soon  
to grieve

Above its first and best inhabitants.

AHO. 'Tis said so.

JAPH. It is even so.

*Enter NOAH and SHEM.*

NOAH. Japhet! What  
Dost thou here with these children of  
the wicked?

Dread'st thou not to partake their coming  
doom?

JAPH. Father, it cannot be a sin to  
seek

To save an earth-born being; and behold,

These are not of the sinful, since they  
have

The fellowship of angels.

NOAH. These are they, then,  
Who leave the throne of God, to take  
them wives

From out the race of Cain; the sons  
of heaven,

Who seek earth's daughters for their  
beauty?

AZA. Patriarch!

Thou hast said it.

NOAH. Woe, woe, woe to such communion!

Has not God made a barrier between  
earth

And heaven, and limited each, kind to  
kind?

SAM. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?

Did God not love what he had made?  
And what

Do we but imitate and emulate  
His love unto created love?

NOAH. I am

But man, and was not made to judge  
mankind,

Far less the sons of God; but as our  
God

Has deign'd to commune with me, and  
reveal

His judgments, I reply, that the descent  
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat

Unto a perishable and perishing,  
Even on the very *eve of perishing*,

world,

Cannot be good.

AZA. What! though it were to save?

NOAH. Not ye in all your glory can  
redeem

What He who made you glorious hath  
condemned.

Were your immortal mission safety,  
'twould

Be general, not for two, though beautiful;

And beautiful they are, but not the less  
Condemn'd.

JAPH. Oh, father! say it not.

NOAH. Son! son!

If that thou wouldst avoid their doom,  
forget

That they exist: they soon shall cease  
to be,

While thou shalt be the sire of a new  
world,

And better.

JAPH. Let me die with *this*, and *them*!

NOAH. Thou *shouldst* for such a  
thought, but shalt not; he

Who *can*, redeems thee.

SAM. And why him and thee,  
More than what he, thy son, prefers  
to both?

NOAH. Ask him who made thee  
greater than myself

And mine, but not less subject to his  
own

Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and  
Least to be tempted messenger appears!

*Enter RAPHAEL the Archangel.*

RAPH. Spirits!

Whose seat is near the throne,

What do ye here?

Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown,

Now that the hour is near

When earth must be alone?

Return!

Adore and burn,

In glorious homage with the elected  
"seven."

Your place is heaven.

SAM. Raphael!

The first and fairest of the sons of God,

How long hath this been law,

That earth by angels must be left untrod?

Earth! which oft saw

Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod!

The world he loved, and made

For love; and oft have we obey'd

His frequent mission with delighted  
pinions:

Adoring him in his least works  
display'd;  
Watching this youngest star of his do-  
minions;  
And, as the latest birth of his great  
word,  
Eager to keep it worthy of our  
Lord.

Why is thy brow severe?  
And wherefore speak'st thou of destruc-  
tion near?

RAPH. Had Samiassa and Azazel been  
In their true place, with the angelic  
choir,

Written in fire  
They would have seen  
Jehovah's late decree,  
And not inquired their Maker's breath  
of me:

But ignorance must ever be  
A part of sin;  
And even the spirits' knowledge shall  
grow less

As they wax proud within:  
For Blindness is the first-born of Ex-  
cess.

When all good angels left the world,  
ye stay'd.

Stung with strange passions, and de-  
based

By mortal feelings for a mortal maid:  
But ye are pardon'd thus far, and re-  
placed

With your pure equals. Hence! away!  
away!

Or stay,  
And lose eternity by that delay!  
AZA. And thou! if earth be thus for-  
bidden

In the decree  
To us until this moment hidden,  
Dost thou not err as we  
In being here?

RAPH. I came to call ye back to your  
fit sphere.

In the great name and at the word  
of God.

Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce  
less dear

That which I came to do: till now we  
trod

Together the eternal space: together  
Let us still walk the stars. True,

earth must die!  
Her race, return'd into her womb, must  
wither,

And much which she inherits: but  
oh! why

Cannot this earth be made, or be  
destroy'd,

Without involving ever some vast  
void

In the immortal ranks? immortal still  
In their immeasurable forfeiture.

Our brother Satan fell; his burning  
will

Rather than longer worship dared en-  
dure!

But ye who still are pure!  
Seraphs! less mighty than that mighti-  
est one,

Think how he was undone!  
And think if tempting man can com-  
pensate

For heaven desired too late?  
Long have I warr'd,

Long must I war  
With him who deem'd it hard  
To be created, and to acknowledge  
him

Who midst the cherubim  
Made him as suns to a dependent  
star,

Leaving the archangels at his right  
hand dim.

I loved him—beautiful he was: oh,  
heaven!

Save his who made, what beauty and  
what power

Was ever like to Satan's! Would the  
hour

In which he fell could ever be for-  
given!

The wish is impious: but, oh ye!  
Yet undestroy'd, be warn'd! Eternity

With him, or with his God, is in your  
choice:

He hath not tempted you; he cannot  
tempt

The angels, from his further snares  
exempt:

But man hath listen'd to his voice,  
And ye to woman's—beautiful she is,  
The serpent's voice less subtle than her  
kiss.

The snake but vanquish'd dust: but she  
will draw

A second host from heaven, to break  
heaven's law.



Yet, yet, oh fly!

Ye cannot die;

But they

Shall pass away,

While ye shall fill with shrieks the  
upper sky

For perishable clay,

Whose memory in your immortality

Shall long outlast the sun which gave  
them day.

Think how your essence differeth from  
theirs

In all but suffering! why partake

The agony to which they must be  
heirs—

Born to be plough'd with years, and  
sown with cares,

And reap'd by Death, lord of the hu-  
man soil?

Even had their days been left to toil,  
their path

Through time to dust, unshorten'd by  
God's wrath,

Still they are Evil's prey and Sor-  
row's spoil.

АНО. Let them fly!

I hear the voice which says that all  
must die,

Sooner than our white-bearded patri-  
archs died;

And that on high

An ocean is prepared,

While from below

The deep shall rise to meet heaven's  
overflow.

Few shall be spared,

It seems; and, of that few, the race of  
Cain

Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in  
vain.

Sister! since it is so,

And the eternal Lord

In vain would be implored

For the remission of our hour of  
woe,

Let us resign even what we have  
adored,

And meet the wave, as we would meet  
the sword,

If not unmoved, yet undismay'd,

And wailing less for us than those who  
shall

Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,

And, when the fatal waters are al-  
lay'd,

Weep for the myriads who can weep no  
more.

Fly, seraphs! to your own eternal shore,  
Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.

Our portion is to die,

And yours to live for ever:

But which is best, a dead eternity.

Or living, is but known to the great  
Giver.

Obeys him, as we shall obey;

I would not keep this life of mine in  
clay

An hour beyond his will;

Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace,  
For all the mercy which Seth's race

Find still.

Fly!

And as your pinions bear ye back to  
heaven,

Think that my love still mounts with  
thee on high,

Samiasa!

And if I look up with a tearless eye,

'Tis that an angel's bride disdains to  
weep,—

Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!

АНАН. And must we die?

And must I lose thee too,  
Azazel?

Oh, my heart! my heart!

Thy prophecies were  
true!

And yet thou wert so happy  
too!

The blow, though not unlook'd for, falls  
as new:

But yet depart!

Ah! why?

Yet let me not retain thee—fly!

My pangs can be but brief; but thine  
would be

Eternal, if repulsed from heaven for  
me.

Too much already hast thou  
deign'd

To one of Adam's race!

Our doom is sorrow: not to us alone,  
But to the spirits who have not dis-  
dain'd

To love us, cometh anguish with dis-  
grace.

The first who taught us knowledge  
hath been hurl'd

From his once archangelic throne

Into some unknown world:

And thou, Azazel! No—  
 Thou shalt not suffer woe  
 For me. Away! nor weep!  
 Thou canst not weep; but yet  
 May'st suffer more, not weeping;  
 then forget  
 Her, whom the surges of the all-  
 strangling deep  
 Can bring no pang like this. Fly!  
 fly!  
 Being gone, 'twill be less difficult to die.  
 JAPH. Oh, say not so!  
 Father! and thou, archangel, thou!  
 Surely celestial mercy lurks below  
 That pure severe serenity of brow;  
 Let them not meet this sea without a  
 shore,  
 Save in our ark, or let me be no  
 more!  
 NOAH. Peace! child of passion,  
 peace!  
 If not within thy heart, yet with thy  
 tongue  
 Do God no wrong!  
 Live as he wills it—die, when he or-  
 dains,  
 A righteous death, unlike the seed of  
 Cain's.  
 Cease, or be sorrowful in silence;  
 cease  
 To weary Heaven's ear with thy self-  
 ish plaint.  
 Wouldst thou have God commit a  
 sin for thee?  
 Such would be it  
 To alter his intent  
 For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!  
 And bear what Adam's race must bear,  
 and can.  
 JAPH. Ay, father! but when they are  
 gone,  
 And we are all alone,  
 Floating upon the azure desert, and  
 The depth beneath us hides our own  
 dear land,  
 And dearer, silent friends and breth-  
 ren all  
 Buried in its immeasurable breast,  
 Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall  
 then command?  
 Can we in desolation's peace have  
 rest?  
 Oh God! be thou a God, and spare  
 Yet while 'tis time!

Renew not Adam's fall:  
 Mankind were then but twain,  
 But they are numerous now as are the  
 waves  
 And the tremendous rain,  
 Whose drops shall be less thick than  
 would their graves,  
 Were graves permitted to the seed of  
 Cain.  
 NOAH. Silence, vain boy! each word  
 of thine's a crime,  
 Angel! forgive this stripling's fond de-  
 spair.  
 RAPH. Seraphs! these mortals speak  
 in passion: Ye!  
 Who are, or should be, passionless and  
 pure,  
 May now return with me.  
 SAM. It may not be:  
 We have chosen, and will endure.  
 JAPH. Say'st thou?  
 AZA. He hath said it, and I  
 say, Amen!  
 JAPH. Again!  
 Then from this hour,  
 Shorn as ye are of all celestial  
 power,  
 And aliens from your God,  
 Farewell!  
 JAPH. Alas! where shall they  
 dwell?  
 Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper  
 still,  
 Are howling from the mountain's  
 bosom:  
 There's not a breath of wind upon the  
 hill,  
 Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each  
 blossom,  
 Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.  
 NOAH. Hark, hark! the sea-birds cry!  
 In clouds they overspread the lurid  
 sky,  
 And hover round the mountain, where  
 before  
 Never a white wing, wetted by the  
 wave,  
 Yet dared to soar,  
 Even when the waters wax'd too fierce  
 to brave.  
 Soon it shall be their only shore,  
 And then, no more!  
 JAPH. The sun! the sun!  
 He riseth, but his better light is gone;

And a black circle, bound-  
His glaring disk around,  
Proclaims earth's last of summer days  
hath shone!

The 'clouds return into the hues of  
night,  
Save where their brazen-colour'd edges  
streak  
The verge where brighter morns were  
wont to break.

NOAH. And lo! yon flash of light,  
The distant thunder's harbinger, ap-  
pears!

It cometh! hence away!  
Leave to the elements their evil prey!  
Hence to where our all-hallow'd ark  
uprears

Its safe and wreckless sides!

JAPH. O, father, stay!  
Leave not my Anah to the swallowing  
tides.

NOAH. Must we not leave all life to  
such? Begone!

JAPH. Not I.  
NOAH. Then die

With them!  
How darest thou look on that prophetic  
sky,

And seek to save what all things now  
condemn,

In overwhelming unison  
With just Jehovah's wrath!

JAPH. Can rage and justice join in  
the same path?

NOAH. Blasphemer! darest thou mur-  
mur even now!

RAPH. Patriarch, be still a father!  
smooth thy brow:

Thy son, despite his folly, shall not  
sink:

He knows not what he says, yet shall  
not drink

With sobs the salt foam of the swell-  
ing waters

But be when passion passeth, good as  
thou,

Nor perish like heaven's children with  
man's daughters.

AHO. The tempest cometh; heaven  
and earth unite

For the annihilation of all life.  
Unequal is the strife

Between our strength and the Eternal  
Might!

SAM. But ours is with thee: we will  
bear ye far ,

To some untroubled star,  
Where thou and Anah shall partake our  
lot:

And if thou dost not weep for thy  
lost earth,

Our forfeit heaven shall also be for-  
got.

ANAH. Oh! my dear father's tents,  
my place of birth,

And mountains, land, and woods! when  
ye are not,

Who shall dry up my tears?

AZA. Thy spirit-lord,  
Fear not; though we are shut from  
heaven,

Yet much is ours, whence we cannot  
be driven.

RAPH. Rebel! thy words are wicked,  
as thy deeds

Shall henceforth be but weak: the  
flaming sword,

Which chased the first-born out of  
Paradise,

Still flashes in the angelic hands.

AZA. It cannot slay us: threaten dust  
with death,

And talk of weapons unto that which  
bleeds.

What are thy swords in our immortal  
eyes?

RAPH. The moment cometh to ap-  
prove thy strength;

And learn at length  
How vain to war with what thy God  
commands:

Thy former force was in thy faith.

*Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.*

*Chorus of Mortals.*

The heavens and earth are mingling—  
God! oh God!

What have we done? Yet spare!  
Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth

their prayer!

The dragon crawls from out his den,  
To herd, in terror, innocent with  
men;

And the birds scream their agony  
through air.

Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy  
rod

Of wrath, and pity thine own world's  
despair!

Hear not man only, but all nature  
plead!

RAPH. Farewell, thou earth! ye  
wretched sons of clay,  
I cannot, must not, aid you. 'Tis de-  
creed! [Exit RAPHAEL.]

JAPH. Some clouds sweep on as vul-  
tures for their prey,  
While others, fix'd as rocks, await the  
word

At which their wrathful vials shall be  
pour'd.

No azure more shall robe the firma-  
ment,

Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death  
hath risen:

In the sun's place a pale and ghastly  
glare

Hath wound itself around the dying  
air.

AZA. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-  
founded prison,

To which the elements again repair,  
To turn it into what it was: beneath

The shelter of these wings thou shalt  
be safe,

As was the eagle's nestling once within  
Its mother's.— Let the coming chaos  
chafe

With all its elements! Heed not their  
din!

A brighter world than this, where thou  
shalt breathe

Ethereal life, will we explore:  
These darken'd clouds are not the only  
skies.

[AZAZIEL and SAMIASA fly off and dis-  
appear with ANAH and AHOLIBAMA.]

JAPH. They are gone! They have dis-  
appear'd amidst the roar

Of the forsaken world; and never more.  
Whether they live, or die with all  
earth's life,

Now near its last, can aught restore  
Anah unto these eyes.

*Chorus of Mortals.*

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!  
What! wilt thou leave us all—all—all  
behind

While safe amidst the elemental strife,  
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark?

*A Mother [offering her infant to  
JAPHET].*

Oh let this child embark!

I brought him forth in woe,

But thought it joy

To see him to my bosom clinging so.

Why was he born?

What hath he done—

My unwean'd son—

To move Jehóvah's wrath or scorn?

What is there in this milk of mine, that  
death

Should stir all heaven and earth up  
to destroy

My boy,

And roll the waters o'er his placid  
breath?

Save him, thou seed of Seth!

Or curs'd be—with him who made

Thee and thy race, for which we are be-  
tray'd!

JAPH. Peace! 'tis no hour for curses,  
but for prayer!

*Chorus of Mortals.*

For prayer!!!

And where

Shall prayer ascend,

When the swoln clouds unto the moun-  
tains bend

And burst,

And gushing oceans every barrier rend,  
Until the very deserts know no  
thirst?

Accurs'd

Be he who made thee and thy sire!

We deem our curses vain; we must ex-  
pire;

But as we know the worst,

Why should our hymn be raised, our  
knees be bent

Before the implacable Omnipotent.

Since we must fall the same?

If he hath made earth, let it be his  
shame,

To make a world for torture.—Lo!  
they come.

The loathsome waters, in their rage!

And with their roar make wholesome  
nature dumb!

The forests' trees (coeval with the  
hour

When Paradise upsprung,

Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for  
her dower,

Or Adam his first hymn of slavery  
sung),

So massy, vast, yet green in their  
old age,

Are overtopp'd,

Their summer blossoms by the surges  
lopp'd,

Which rise, and rise, and rise.

Vainly we look up to the lowering  
skies—

They meet the seas,

And shut out God from our beseeching  
eyes.

Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine  
ease,

In thine allotted ocean-tent;

And view, all floating o'er the element,  
The corpses of the world of thy young  
days:

Then to Jehovah raise

Thy song of praise!

A MORTAL. Blessed are the dead

Who die in the Lord!

And though the waters be o'er earth  
outspread,

Yet, as *his* word,

Be the decree adored!

He gave me life—he taketh but

The breath which is his own:

And though these eyes should be for  
ever shut,

Nor longer this weak voice before his  
throne

Be heard in supplicating tone,

Still blessèd be the Lord,

For what is past,

For that which is:

For all are his,

From first to last—

Time—space—eternity—life—death—

The vast known and immeasurable  
unknown.

He made, and can unmake;

And shall *I*, for a little gasp of breath,  
Blasphe<sup>m</sup>e and groan?

No; let me die, as I have lived, in  
faith,

Nor quiver, though the universe may  
quake!

*Chorus of Mortals.*

Where shall we fly?

Not to the mountains high;

For now their torrents rush, with double  
roar,

To meet the ocean, which, advancing  
still,

Already grasps each drowning hill,  
Nor leaves an unsearch'd cave.

*Enter a WOMAN.*

WOMAN. Oh, save me, save!

Our valley is no more:

My father and my father's tent,

My brethren and my brethren's herds,

The pleasant trees that o'er our noon-  
day bent,

And sent forth evening songs from  
sweetest birds,

The little rivulet which freshen'd all

Our pastures green,

No more are to be seen.

When to the mountain cliff I climb'd  
this morn,

I turn'd to bless the spot,

And not a leaf appear'd about to fall;—

And now they are not!

Why was I born?

JAPH. To die! in youth to die!

And happier in that doom,

Than to behold the universal tomb,

Which I

Am thus condemn'd to weep above in  
vain.

Why, when all perish, why must I re-  
main?

[*The waters rise; Men fly in every di-  
rection: many are overtaken by the  
waves; the Chorus of Mortals dis-  
perses in search of safety up the  
mountains: JAPHET remains upon a  
rock, while the Ark floats towards  
him in the distance.*]

LORD BYRON (1788-1824).





# MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES



# MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

## A SACRED DRAMA.

Let me assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to man.

—*Paradise Lost.*

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

#### HEBREW WOMEN.

JOCHEBED, mother of Moses.  
MIRIAM, his sister.

#### EGYPTIANS.

THE PRINCESS, King Pharaoh's daughter.

MELITA, and other attendants.

*Scene—On the banks of the Nile.*

(This subject is taken from the second chapter of the Book of Exodus.)

### PART I.

JOCHEBED, MIRIAM.

Joch. Why was my pray'r accepted?  
why did heaven  
In anger hear me, when I ask'd a son?  
Ye dames of Egypt! ye triumphant  
mothers!  
You no imperial tyrant marks for ruin;  
You are not doom'd to see the babes  
you bore,  
The babes you fondly nurture, bleed before you!  
You taste the transport of a mother's  
love,  
Without a mother's anguish! wretched  
Israel!  
Can I forbear to mourn the different  
lot  
Of thy sad daughters!—Why did God's  
own hand

Rescue his chosen race by Joseph's  
care?

Joseph! th' elected instrument of  
heaven,

Decreed to save illustrious Abraham's  
sons,

What time the famine rag'd in Canaan's  
land.

Israel, who then was spar'd, must perish  
now!

Thou great mysterious Pow'r, who  
hast involv'd

Thy wise decrees in darkness, to perplex

The pride of human wisdom, to confound

The daring scrutiny, and prove, the  
faith

Of thy presuming creatures! hear me  
now:

O vindicate thy honour, clear this  
doubt,

Teach me to trace this maze of Providence:

Why save the fathers, if the sons must  
perish?

MIR. Ah me, my mother! whence  
these floods of grief?

Joch. My son! my son! I cannot  
speak the rest;

Ye who have sons can only know my  
fondness

Ye who have lost them, or who fear  
to lose,

Can only know my pangs! none else  
can guess them.

A mother's sorrows cannot be conceived

But by a mother—would I were not  
one!

MIR. With earnest pray'rs thou  
didst request this son,

And heaven has granted him.

Joch.

O sad estate

Of human wretchedness; so weak is  
man,

So ignorant and blind, that did not God  
Sometimes withhold in mercy what we  
ask,

We should be ruin'd at our own re-  
quest.

Too well thou know'st, my child, the  
stern decree

Of Egypt's cruel king, hard-hearted  
Pharaoh;

That every male, of Hebrew mother  
born,

Must die! Oh! do I live to tell it thee!

Must die a bloody death! My child,  
my son,

My youngest born, my darling must be  
slain!

MIR. The helpless innocent! and  
must he die?

JOCH. No: if a mother's tears, a  
mother's prayers,

A mother's fond precautions can pre-  
vail,

He shall not die. I have a thought, my  
Miriam,

And sure the God of mercies who in-  
spir'd,

Will bless the secret purpose of my  
soul.

To save his precious life.

MIR. Hop'st thou that Pharaoh—

JOCH. I have no hope in Pharaoh,  
much in God;

Much in the Rock of Ages.

MIR. Think, O think,

What perils thou already hast in-  
curr'd,

And shun the greater which may yet  
remain,

Three months, three dangerous months  
thou hast preserv'd

Thy infant's life, and in thy house con-  
ceal'd him!

JOCH. Oh! let the tyrant know,

And feel what he inflicts! Yes, hear  
me, heaven!

Send thy right aiming thunderbolts—  
but hush,

My impious murmurs! is it not thy  
will;

Thou, infinite in mercy? Thou per-  
mitt'st

The seeming evil for some latent good.

Yes, I will laud thy grace, and bless  
thy goodness

For what I have, and not arraign thy  
wisdom

For what I fear to lose. O, I will bless  
thee

That Aaron will be spar'd; that my  
first born

Lives safe and undisturbed! that he  
was giv'n me.

Before this impious persecution rag'd!

MIR. And yet who knows, but the  
fell tyrant's rage

May reach *his* precious life.

JOCH. I fear for him.  
For thee, for all. A doating parent  
lives

In many lives; through many a nerve  
she feels;

From child to child the quick affections  
spread,

Forever wand'ring, yet forever fix'd.  
Nor does division weaken, nor the  
force

Of constant operation e'er exhaust  
Parental love. All other passions  
change

With changing circumstances; rise or  
fall,

Dependent on their object; claim re-  
turns;

Live on reciprocation, and expire  
Unfed by hope. A mother's fondness  
reigns

Without a rival, and without an end.

MIR. But say what heav'n inspires  
to save thy son?

JOCH. Since the dear fatal morn  
which gave him birth,

I have revolv'd in my distracted mind  
Each means to save his life: and  
many a thought

Which fondness prompted, prudence  
has oppos'd

As perilous and rash. With these poor  
hands

I've fram'd a little ark of slender  
reeds;

With pitch and slime I have secur'd  
the sides.

In this frail cradle I intend to lay  
My little helpless infant, and expose  
him

Upon the banks of the Nile.

MIR. 'Tis full of danger.



JOCH. 'Tis danger to expose, and death to keep him.

MIR. Yet, oh! reflect. Should the fierce crocodile,  
The native and the tyrant of the Nile,  
Seize the defenceless infant!

JOCH. Oh forbear!  
Spare my fond heart. Yet not the crocodile,

Nor all the deadly monsters of the deep,

To me are half so terrible as Pharaoh,  
That heathen king, that royal murderer!

MIR. Should he escape, which yet I dare not hope,  
Each sea-born monster, yet the winds and waves

He cannot 'scape.

JOCH. Know, God is everywhere;  
Not to one narrow, partial spot confin'd:

No, not to chosen Israel: he extends  
Through all the vast infinitude of space:

At his command the furious tempests rise—

The blasting of the breath of his displeasure,

He tells the world of waters when to roar;

And, at his bidding, winds and seas are calm:

In him, not in an arm of flesh, I trust;  
In him, whose promise never yet has fail'd,

I place my confidence.

MIR. What must I do?  
Command thy daughter; for thy words have wak'd

An holy boldness in my youthful breast.

JOCH. Go then, my Miriam, go, and take the infant.

Buried in harmless slumbers there he lies:

Let me not see him—spare my heart that pang.

Yet sure, one little look may be indulg'd,

And I may feast my fondness with his smiles,

And snatch one last, last kiss.—No more my heart;

That rapture would be fatal—I should keep him.

I could not doom to death the babe I clasp'd

Did ever mother kill her sleeping boy?  
I dare not hazard it—The task be thine.

Oh! do not wake my child; remove him softly;

And gently lay him on the river's brink.

MIR. Did those magicians, whom the sons of Egypt

Consult and think all-potent, join their skill

And was it great as Egypt's sons believe;

Yet all their secret wizard arts combin'd,

To save this little ark of bulrushes,  
Thus fearfully expos'd, could not effect it.

Their spells, their incantations, and dire charms

Could not preserve it.

JOCH. Know this ark is charm'd  
With incantations Pharaoh ne'er employ'd;

With spells, which impious Egypt never knew:

With invocations to the living God,  
I twisted every slender reed together,  
And with a pray'r did every ozier weave.

MIR. I go.

JOCH. Yet e'er thou go'st, observe me well;

When thou hast laid him in his wat'ry bed,

O leave him not: but at a distance wait,

And mark what Heaven's high will determines for him.

Lay him among the flags on yonder beach,

Just where the royal gardens meet the Nile.

I dare not follow him, Suspicion's eye  
Would note my wild demeanor! Miriam, yes,

The mother's fondness would betray the child.

Farewell! God of my fathers. Oh, protect him!

## PART II.

*Enter MIRIAM after having deposited the child.*

MIR. YES, I have laid him in his wat'ry bed,  
His wat'ry grave, I fear!—I tremble still;

It was a cruel task—still I must weep!  
But ah, my mother! who shall sooth thy griefs!

The flags and sea-weeds will awhile sustain

Their precious load; but it must sink ere long!

Sweet babe, farewell! Yet think not I will leave thee:

No, I will watch thee till the greedy waves

Devour thy little bark: I'll sit me down,

And sing to thee, sweet babe; thou can'st not hear

But 'twill amuse me, while I watch thy fate.

*[She sits down on a bank, and sings.]*

## SONG.

## I.

THOU, who canst make the feeble strong,

O God of Israel, hear my song!

Not mine such notes as Egypt's daughters raise;

'Tis thee, O God of Hosts, I strive to praise.

## II.

Ye winds, the servants of the Lord,  
Ye waves, obedient to his word,

Oh spare the babe committed to your trust;

And Israel shall confess the Lord is just!

## III.

Though doom'd to find an early grave,

This infant, Lord, thy power can save,

And he, whose death's decreed by Pharaoh's hand,

May rise a prophet to redeem the land.

*[She rises and looks out.]*

What female form bends thitherward her steps?

Of royal port she seems; perhaps some friend,

Rais'd by the guardian care of bounteous Heaven,  
To prop the falling house of Levi.—  
Soft!

I'll listen unperceiv'd; these trees will hide me.

*[She stands behind.]*

*Enter the PRINCESS OF EGYPT, attended by a train of ladies.*

PRIN. No farther, virgins, here I mean to rest.

To taste the pleasant coolness of the breeze;

Perhaps to bathe in this translucent stream

Did not our holy law\* enjoin th' ab-lution

Frequent and regular, it still were needful

To mitigate the fervours of our clime.

Melita, stay—the rest at distance wait.

*[They all go out, except one.]*

*The PRINCESS looks out.*

Sure, or I much mistake, or I perceive

Upon the sedgy margin of the Nile

A chest; entangled in the reeds it seems:

Discern'st thou aught?

MEL. Something, but what I know not.

PRIN. Go and examine what this sight may mean. *[Exit maid.]*

*MIRIAM behind.*

O blest, beyond my hopes! he is discover'd;

My brother will be sav'd!—who is the stranger?

Ah! 'tis the princess, cruel Pharaoh's daughter.

If she resemble her inhuman sire,  
She must be cruel too; yet fame re-ports her

Most merciful and mild.—Great Lord of all,

\*The ancient Egyptians used to wash their bodies four times every twenty-four hours.

By whose good Spirit bounteous  
thoughts are given  
And deeds of love perform'd—be gra-  
cious now,  
And touch her soul with mercy!

*Re-enter MELITA.*

PRIN. Well, Melita!  
Hast thou discover'd what the vessel  
is?

MEL. Oh, princess, I have seen the  
strangest sight!  
Within the vessel lies a sleeping babe,  
A fairer infant have I never seen!

PRIN. Who knows but some un-  
happy Hebrew woman  
Has thus expos'd her infant, to evade  
The stern decree of my too cruel sire.  
Unhappy mothers! oft my heart has  
bled

In secret anguish o'er your slaughter'd  
sons,  
Powerless to save, yet hating to de-  
stroy.

MEL. Should this be so, my princess  
knows the danger.

PRIN. No danger should deter from  
acts of mercy.

*MIRIAM behind.*

A thousand blessings on her princely  
head;

PRIN. Too much the sons of Ja-  
cob have endur'd  
From Royal Pharaoh's unrelenting  
hate;

Too much our house has crush'd their  
alien race.

Is't not enough that cruel task-mas-  
ters

Grind them by hard oppression? not  
enough

That iron bondage bows their spirits  
down?

Is't not enough my sire his greatness  
owes,

His palaces, his fanes magnificent,  
Those structures which the world with  
wonder views,

To much insulted Israel's patient race?  
To them his growing cities owe their  
splendour

Their toils fair Rameses and Pythom  
built;

And shall we fill the measure of our  
crimes,

And crown our guilt with murder? and  
shall I

Sanction the sin I hate? forbid it,  
Mercy!

MEL. I know thy royal father fears  
the strength

Of this still growing race, who flourish  
more

The more they are oppress'd: he  
dreads their numbers.

PRIN. Apis forbid! Pharaoh afraid  
of Israel!

Yet should this outcast race, this hap-  
less people

Ere grow to such a formidable great-  
ness,

(Which all the gods avert whom Egypt  
worship)

This infant's life can never serve their  
cause,

Nor can his single death prevent their  
greatness.

MEL. Trust not to that vain hope.

By weakest means

And most unlikely instrument, full oft  
Are great events produc'd. This res-  
cued child

Perhaps may live to serve his upstart  
race

More than an host.

PRIN. How ill it does beseem  
Thy tender years and gentle woman-  
hood,

To steel thy breast to Pity's sacred  
touch!

So weak, so unprotected is our sex,  
So constantly expos'd, so very helpless,

That did not Heaven itself enjoin com-  
passion,

Yet human policy should make us kind,  
Lest in the rapid turn of Fortune's

wheel,

We live to need the pity we refuse.  
Yes, I will save him—Mercy, thou hast  
conquered!

Lead on—and from the rushes we'll  
remove

The feeble ark which cradles this poor  
babe.

[*The PRINCESS and her maid go out.*

*MIRIAM comes forward.*]

How poor were words to speak my  
boundless joy!  
The princess will protect him; bless  
her, Heaven!

[*She looks out after the princess, and  
describes her action.*]

With what impatient steps she seeks  
the shore!  
Now she approaches where the ark is  
laid!  
With what compassion, with what an-  
gel sweetness,  
She bends to look upon the infant's  
face!  
She takes his little hand in hers—he  
wakes—  
She smiles upon him—hark, alas! he  
cries;  
Weep on, sweet babe! weep on, till  
thou hast touch'd  
Each chord of pity, waken'd every  
sense  
Of melting sympathy, and stolen her  
soul!  
She takes him in her arms—O lovely  
princess!  
How goodness heightens beauty! now  
she clasps him  
With fondness to her heart, she gives  
him now  
With tender caution to her damsel's  
arms:  
She points her to the palace, and again  
This way the princess bends her gra-  
cious steps;  
The virgin train retire and bear the  
child.

*Re-enter the PRINCESS.*

PRIN. Did ever innocence and infant  
beauty  
Plead with such dumb but powerful  
eloquence?  
If I, a stranger, feel these soft emo-  
tions,  
What must the mother who expos'd  
him feel!  
Go, fetch a woman of the Hebrew  
race,  
That she may nurse the babe: and, by  
her garb,

Lo, such a one is here!

MIR. Princess, all hail!  
Forgive the bold intrusion of thy  
servant,  
Who stands a charm'd spectator of thy  
goodness.

PRIN. I have redeem'd an infant  
from the waves,  
Whom I intend to nurture as mine  
own.

MIR. My transports will betray me!  
[*aside.*] Gen'rous Princess!

PRIN. Know'st thou a matron of the  
Hebrew race  
To whom I may confide him?

MIR. Well I know  
A prudent matron of the house of  
Levi;  
Her name Jochebed, is the wife of  
Amram;  
Of gentle manners, fam'd throughout  
her tribe  
For soft humanity; full well I know  
That she will rear him with a moth-  
er's love.

[*Aside.*] Oh, truly spoke! a mother's  
love indeed!

To her despairing arms I mean to  
give  
This precious trust: the nurse shall be  
the mother!

PRIN. With speed conduct this  
matron to the palace.  
Yes, I will raise him up to princely  
greatness,  
And he shall be my son; I'll have him  
train'd

By choicest sages, in the deepest lore  
Of Egypt's sapient son;—his name be  
*Moses,*

For I have drawn him from the peril-  
ous flood.

[*They go out. She kneels.*]

Thou Great unseen! who causest  
gentle deeds,  
And smil'st on what thou causest;  
thus I bless thee.  
That thou did'st deign consult the ten-  
der make  
Of yielding human hearts, when thou  
ordain'dst  
Humanity a virtue! did'st not make it  
A rigorous exercise to counteract  
Some strong desire within; to war and  
fight

Against the powers of Nature; but  
 did'st bend  
 The nat'ral bias of the soul to mercy:  
 Then mad'st that mercy duty! Gracious  
 Power!  
 Mad'st the keen rapture exquisite as  
 right;  
 Beyond the joys of sense; as pleasure  
 sweet,  
 As reason vigorous, and as instinct  
 strong!

## PART III.

*Enter JOCHEBED.*

I've almost reach'd the place—with  
 cautious steps  
 I must approach the spot where he is  
 laid,  
 Lest from the royal gardens any 'spy  
 me:  
 —Poor babe! ere this the pressing calls  
 of hunger  
 Have broke thy short repose; the chill-  
 ing waves,  
 Ere this have drench'd thy little  
 shiv'ring limbs.  
 What must my babe have suffer'd!—  
 No one sees me!  
 But soft, does no one listen!—Ah!  
 how hard,  
 How very hard for fondness to be pru-  
 dent!  
 Now is the moment to embrace and  
 feed him, [*She looks out*]  
 Where's Miriam? she has left her little  
 charge,  
 Perhaps through fear; perhaps she  
 was detected.  
 How wild is thought! how terrible is  
 conjecture!  
 A mother's fondness frames a thou-  
 sand fears,  
 With thrilling nerve feels every real  
 ill,  
 And shapes imagin'd miseries into be-  
 ing.  
 [*She looks towards the river.*]  
 Ah me! where is he? soul-distracting  
 sight!  
 He is not there—he's lost, he's gone,  
 he's drown'd!

Toss'd by each beating surge my infant  
 floats.  
 Cold, cold, and wat'ry is thy grave, my  
 child!  
 O no—I see the ark—transporting sight!  
 [*She goes towards it.*]  
 I have it here—Alas, the ark is empty!  
 The casket's left, the precious gem is  
 gone!  
 You spar'd him, pitying spirits of the  
 deep!  
 But vain your mercy; some insatiate  
 beast,  
 And I shall never, never see my boy!  
 spar'd—  
 And I shall never, never see my boy!

*Enter MIRIAM.*

JOCH. Come and lament with me  
 thy brother's loss!  
 MIR. Come and adore with me the  
 God of Jacob!  
 JOCH. Miriam—the child is dead!  
 MIR. He lives! he lives!  
 JOCH. Impossible—Oh, do not mock  
 my grief!  
 See'st thou that empty vessel?  
 MIR. From that vessel  
 Th' Egyptian princess took him.  
 JOCH. Pharaoh's daughter?  
 Then still he will be slain: a bloodier  
 death  
 Will terminate his woes.  
 MIR. His life is safe;  
 For know, she means to rear him as  
 her own.  
 JOCH. [*Falls on her knees in rapture.*]  
 To God, the Lord, the glory be  
 ascrib'd!  
 O magnify'd forever be thy might  
 Who mock'st all human forethought!  
 who o'er-rulest  
 The hearts of all sinners to perform  
 thy work,  
 Defeating their own purpose! who  
 canst plant  
 Unlook'd-for mercy in a heathen's  
 heart,  
 And from the depth of evil bring forth  
 good? [*She rises.*]  
 MIR. O blest event, beyond our  
 warmest hopes!  
 JOCH. What! shall my son be nur-  
 tur'd in a court,



In princely grandeur bred? taught  
every art  
And ev'ry wond'rous science Egypt  
knows?  
Yet ah! I tremble Miriam; should he  
learn,  
With Egypt's polish'd arts her baneful  
faith!  
O worse exchange for death! yes,  
should he learn  
In yon proud palace to disown *His*  
hand  
Who thus has sav'd him: should he  
e'er embrace  
(As sure he will, if bred in Pharaoh's  
court)  
The gross idolatries which Egypt  
owns,  
Her graven images, her brutish gods,  
Then shall I wish he had not been pre-  
serv'd  
To shame his fathers and deny his  
faith.

MIR. Then to dispel thy fears and  
crown thy joy,  
Hear farther wonders—Know, the  
gen'rous princess  
To thine own care thy darling child  
commits.

JOCH. Speak, while my joy will give  
me leave to listen!

MIR. By her commission'd, thou be-  
hold'st me here,  
To seek a matron of the Hebrew  
race  
To nurse him: thou, my mother, art  
that matron  
I said I knew thee well; that thou  
would'st rear him,  
E'en with a mother's fondness; she  
who bare him  
(I told the princess) would not love  
him more.

JOCH. Fountain of Mercy! whose  
pervading eye  
Can look within and read what passes  
there,

Accept my thoughts for thanks! I  
have no words.

My soul, o'erfraught with gratitude,  
rejects  
The aid of language—Lord! behold my  
heart.

MIR. Yes, thou shalt pour into his  
infant mind

The purest precepts of the purest  
faith.

JOCH. O! I will fill his tender soul  
with virtue,  
And warm his bosom with devotion's  
flame!

Aid me, celestial Spirit! with thy  
grace,  
And be my labours with thy influence  
crown'd!

Without it they were vain. Then,  
then, my Miriam,  
When he is furnish'd 'gainst the evil  
day,

With God's whole armour,\* girt with  
sacred truth,

And as a breastplate wearing right-  
eousness,

Arm'd with the Spirit of God, the  
shield of faith,

And with the helmet of salvation  
crown'd,

Inur'd to watching and dispos'd to  
prayer;

Then may I send him to a dangerous  
court,

And safely trust him in a perilous  
world,

Too full of tempting snares and fond  
delusions!

MIR. May bounteous Heav'n thy pi-  
ous cares reward!

JOCH. O Amram! O my husband!  
when thou com'st,  
Wearied at night, to rest thee from  
the toils

Impos'd by haughty Pharaoh, what a  
tale

Have I to tell thee! Yes: thy dar-  
ling son

Was lost, and is restor'd; was dead,  
and lives!

MIR. How joyful shall we spend the  
live-long night

In praises to Jehovah; who thus  
mocks

All human foresight, and converts the  
means

Of seeming ruin into great deliverance!

JOCH. Had not my child been  
doom'd to such strange perils  
As a fond mother trembles to recall,  
He had not been preserv'd.

MIR. And mark still farther;

\**Thess., chap. v.; Ephes., chap. vi.*

Had he been sav'd by any other hand,  
He had been still expos'd to equal  
ruin.

Joch. Then let us join to bless the  
hand of Heaven,  
That this poor outcast of the house of  
Israel,  
Condemn'd to die by Pharaoh, kept in  
secret  
By my advent'rous fondness; then ex-  
pos'd  
E'en by that very fondness which con-  
ceal'd him,

Is now, to fill the wondrous round of  
mercy,

Preserv'd from perishing by Pharaoh's  
daughter,

Sav'd by the very hand which sought  
to crush him.

Wise and unsearchable are all thy  
ways,

Thou God of Mercies—Lead me to my  
child.

HANNAH MORE (1745-1833).



# SAMSON AGONISTES





# SAMSON AGONISTES

A DRAMATIC POEM.

## THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.

MANOAH, the father of Samson.

DALILA, his wife.

HARAPHA of Gath.

Public Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Samson made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit awhile and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoah, who endeavors the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who, in the meanwhile, is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer to require his

coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play and show his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance: in the midst of which discourse a Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly relates the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

---

*The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.*

SAMSON.

A little onward lend thy guiding hand  
To these dark steps, a little farther on;  
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or  
shade.

There I am wont to sit, when any  
chance

Relieves me from my task of servile  
toil,

Daily in the common prison else in-  
join'd me.

Where I a prisoner chain'd scarce freely  
draw

The air imprison'd also, close and  
damp,

Unwholesome draught: but here I feel  
amends,

The breath of heaven fresh blowing,  
pure and sweet,

\*Although brief extracts from this drama appear on pp. 143, 150, 151, it has been thought proper to include the poem in full, rather than mar the beauty of the whole by omitting the parts already quoted.—EDITOR.

With day-spring born; here leave me to  
respire.

This day a solemn feast the people hold  
To Dagon, their sea-idol, and forbid  
Laborious works; unwillingly this rest  
Their superstition yields me; hence with  
leave

Retiring from the popular noise, I seek  
This unfrequented place to find some  
ease,

Ease to the body some, none to the  
mind

From restless thoughts that like a dead-  
ly swarm

Of hornets armed, no sooner found  
alone,

But rush upon me thronging, and pre-  
sent

Times past, what once I was, and what  
am now.

O wherefore was my birth from heaven  
foretold

Twice by an angel, who at last in sight  
Of both my parents all in flames as-  
cended

From off the altar, where an offering  
burn'd.

As in a fiery column charioting  
His godlike presence, and from some  
great act

Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?  
Why was my breeding order'd and pre-  
scrib'd

As of a person separate to God,  
Design'd for great exploits; if I must  
die

Betrav'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes  
put out,

Made of my enemies the scorn and  
gaze;

To grind in brazen fetters under task  
With this heaven-gifted strength? O  
glorious strength

Put to the labour of a beast, debas'd  
Lower than bondslave! Promise was  
that I

Should Israel from Philistian yoke de-  
liver:

Ask for this great deliverer now, and  
find him

Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves.  
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke;  
Yet stay: let me not rashly call in doubt  
Divine prediction; what if all foretold

Had been fulfill'd but through mine  
own default

Whom have I to complain of but my-  
self?

Who this high gift of strength com-  
mitted to me.

In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft  
me,

Under the seal of silence could not  
keep.

But weakly to a woman must reveal it,  
O'ercome with importunity and tears.  
O impotence of mind, in body strong!  
But what is strength without a double  
share

Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burden-  
some,

Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule.  
But to subserve where wisdom bears  
command

God, when he gave me strength, to show  
withal

How slight the gift was, hung it in  
my hair.

But peace, I must not quarrel with the  
will

Of highest dispensation, which herein  
Haply had ends above my reach to  
know:

Suffices that to me strength is my bane,  
And proves the source of all my mis-  
eries;

So many, and so huge, that each apart  
Would ask a life to wail, but chief of  
all,

O loss of sight, of thee I most com-  
plain!

Blind among enemies, O worse than  
chains,

Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepid age!  
Light, the prime work of God to me  
is extinct.

And all her various objects of delight  
Annull'd, which might in part my grief  
have eased.

Inferior to the vilest now become  
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel  
me,

They creep, yet see, I dark in light  
expos'd

To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and  
wrong.

Within doors, or without, still as a fool,  
 In power of others, never in my own;  
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more  
 than half.  
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of  
 noon,  
 Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse  
 Without all hope of day!  
 O not created beam, and thou great  
 Word,  
 Let there be light, and light was over  
 all;  
 Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime de-  
 cree?  
 The sun to me is dark  
 And silent as the moon.  
 When she deserts the night  
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.  
 Since light so necessary is to life,  
 And almost life itself, if it be true  
 That light is in the soul,  
 She all in every part; why was the  
 sight  
 To such a tender ball as th' eye con-  
 fin'd,  
 So obvious and so easy to be quench'd?  
 And not as feeling through all parts  
 diffus'd,  
 That she might look at will through  
 every pore?  
 Then had I not been thus exil'd from  
 light,  
 As in the land of darkness yet in light;  
 To live a life half dead, a living death.  
 And buried; but O yet more miserable!  
 Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave.  
 Buried, yet not exempt  
 By privilege of death and burial  
 From worst of other evils, pains and  
 wrongs.  
 But made hereby obnoxious more  
 To all the miseries of life,  
 Life in captivity  
 Among inhuman foes.  
 But who are these? for with joint pace  
 I hear  
 The tread of many feet steering this  
 way;  
 Perhaps my enemies who come to stare  
 At my affliction, and perhaps t' insult.  
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.

## CHORUS.

This, this is he; softly awhile!  
 Let us not break in upon him:  
 O change beyond report, thought, or  
 belief!  
 See how he lies at random, carelessly  
 diffus'd,  
 With languish'd head unpropp'd,  
 As one past hope, abandon'd,  
 And by himself given over;  
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds  
 O'er-worn and soil'd;  
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this  
 be he,  
 That heroic, that renown'd,  
 Irresistible Samson? whom unarm'd  
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild  
 beast could withstand;  
 Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the  
 kid,  
 Ran on imbattled armies clad in iron;  
 And weaponless himself  
 Made arms ridiculous, unless the forg-  
 ery  
 Of brazen shield and spear, the ham-  
 mer'd cuirass,  
 Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of  
 mail,  
 Adamantean proof;  
 But safest he who stood aloof,  
 When insupportably his foot advanc'd,  
 In scorn of their proud arms and war-  
 like tools,  
 Spurn'd them to death by troops. The  
 bold Ascalonite  
 Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors  
 turn'd  
 Their plated backs under his heel;  
 Or grov'ling soil'd their crested helmets  
 in the dust  
 Then with what trivial weapon came  
 to hand.  
 The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of  
 bone.  
 A thousand foreskins fell, the flower  
 of Palestine.  
 In Ramath-lechi famous to this day.  
 Then by main force pull'd up, and on  
 his shoulders bore  
 The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,  
 Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of  
 giants old,  
 No journey of a Sabbath-day, and  
 loaded so;

Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear  
up heaven.

Which shall I first bewail.

Thy bondage or lost sight,

Prison within prison

Inseparably dark?

Thou art become (O worst imprison-  
ment!)

The dungeon of thyself; thy soul  
(Which men enjoying sight oft without  
cause complain)

Imprison'd now indeed,  
In real darkness of the body dwells,

Shut up from outward light

T' incorp'rate with gloomy night,

For inward light, alas!

Puts forth no visual beam.

O mirror of our fickle state,

Since man on earth unparallel'd!

The rarer thy example stands,

By how much from the top of won-  
d'rous glory,

Strongest of mortal men,

To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou  
art fallen!

For him I reckon not in high estate

Whom long descent of birth

Or the sphere of fortune raises;

But thee whose strength, while virtue  
was her mate,

Might have subdued the earth,

Universally crown'd with highest  
praises.

SAMSON.

I hear the sound of words, their sense  
the air

Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

CHORUS.

He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless  
in might,

The glory late of Israel, now the grief;  
We come thy friends and neighbours  
not unknown

From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,

To visit or bewail thee, or if better,

Counsel or consolation we may bring,

Salve to thy sores; apt words have  
power to 'suage

The tumours of a troubled mind,

And are as balm to fester'd wounds.

SAMSON.

Your coming, friends, revives me, for I  
learn

Now of my own experience, not by talk,  
How counterfeit a coin they are who  
friends

Bear in their superscription, (of the  
most

I would be understood,) in prosp'rous  
days

They swarm, but in adverse withdraw  
their head,

Not to be found though sought. Ye  
see, O friends,

How many evils have enclos'd me  
round;

Yet that which was the worst now least  
afflicts me,

Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd  
with shame,

How could I once look up, or heave the  
head,

Who like a foolish pilot have ship-  
wreck'd

My vessel trusted to me from above,  
Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a  
tear,

Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of  
God

To a deceitful woman? tell me, friends,  
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool

In every street? do they not say, how  
well

Are come upon him his deserts? yet  
why?

Immeasurable strength they might be-  
hold

In me, of wisdom nothing more than  
mean:

This with the other should, at least,  
have pair'd,

These two, proportion'd ill, drove me  
transverse.

CHORUS.

Tax not divine disposal; wisest men  
Have err'd, and by bad women been  
deceiv'd;

And shall again, pretend they ne'er so  
wise.

Deject not then so overmuch thy self,  
Who hast of sorrow thy full load be-  
sides;

Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder  
 Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather  
 Than of thy own tribe fairer, or as fair,  
 At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

SAMSON.

The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd  
 Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed  
 The daughter of an infidel; they knew not  
 That what I motion'd was of God; I knew  
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd  
 The marriage on; that by occasion hence  
 I might begin Israel's deliverance,  
 The work to which I was divinely call'd.  
 She proving false, the next I took to wife  
 (O that I never had! fond wish too late,)  
 Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,  
 That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare.  
 I thought it lawful from my former act,  
 And the same end: still watching to oppress  
 Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer  
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself,  
 Who vanquish'd with a peal of words (O weakness!)  
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

CHORUS.

In seeking just occasion to provoke  
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,  
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:  
 Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

SAMSON.

That fault I take not on me, but transfer

On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,

Who seeing those great acts, which God had done

Singly by me against their conqueror,  
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd

Deliverance offer'd: I on the other side  
 Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,  
 The deeds themselves, though mute,  
 Spoke loud the doer;

But they persisted deaf and would not seem

To count them things worth notice, till at length

Their lords the Philistines with gather'd powers

Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then  
 Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd,  
 Not flying, but fore-casting in what place

To set upon them, what advantag'd best.  
 Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent

The harass of their land, beset me round;

I willingly on some conditions came  
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me

To the uncircumcised a welcome prey,  
 Bound with two cords: but cords to me were threads

Touch'd with the flame; on their whole host I flew

Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd

Their choicest youth; they only liv'd who fled.

Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,

They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,

And lorded over them whom now they serve;

But what more oft in nations grown corrupt

And by their vices brought to servitude,  
 Than to love bondage more than liberty,  
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;

And to despise, or envy, or suspect  
 Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd

As their deliverer; if he aught begin,



How frequent to desert him, and at last  
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

CHORUS.

Thy words to my remembrance bring  
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel  
Their great deliverer contemn'd,  
The matchless Gideon in pursuit  
Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings:  
And how ingrateful Ephraim  
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argu-  
ment,

Not worse than by his shield and spear,  
Defended Israel from the Ammonite  
Had not his prowess quell'd their pride  
In that sore battle, when so many died  
Without reprieve adjudg'd to death,  
For want of well pronouncing Shibbo-  
leth.

SAMSON.

Of such examples add me to the roll.  
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,  
But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

CHORUS.

Just are the ways of God,  
And justifiable to men:  
Unless there be who think not God at  
all;

If any be, they walk obscure;  
For of such doctrine never was there  
school,

But the heart of the fool,  
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his  
ways not just,

As to his own edicts found contradict-  
ing,

Then give the reins to wand'ring  
thought,

Regardless of his glory's diminution;

Till by their own perplexities involv'd

They ravel more, still less resolv'd,

But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' Intermin-  
able,

And tie him to his own prescript,

Who made our laws to bind us, not  
himself,

And hath full right t' exempt

Whom so it pleases him by choice  
From national obstriction, without taint  
Of sin or legal debt:

For with his own laws he can best dis-  
pense.

He would not else who never wanted  
means,

Nor in respect of th' enemy just cause  
To set his people free,

Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,  
Against his vow of strictest purity

To seek in marriage that salacious  
bride,

Unclean, unchaste.

Down reason then, at least vain rea-  
sonings down,

Though reason here aver

That moral verdict quits her of un-  
clean;

Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not  
his.

But see, here comes thy reverend sire  
With careful steps, locks white as  
down.

Old Manoah: advise

Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive  
him.

SAMSON.

Ah me, another inward grief awak'd  
With mention of that name renews th'  
assault.

MANOAH.

Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye  
seem

Though in this uncouth place: if old  
respect

As I suppose, towards your once gloried  
friend,

My son now captive, hither hath in-  
form'd

Your younger feet, while mine cast back  
with age

Came lagging after; say if he be here.

CHORUS.

As signal now in low dejected state,

As erst in highest, behold him where he  
lies.

MANOAH.

O miserable change! is this the man,  
 That invincible Samson, far renown'd,  
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a  
 strength  
 Equivalent to angels walk'd their  
 streets,  
 None offering fight; who single combatant  
 Duell'd their armies rank'd in proud  
 array,  
 Himself an army, now unequal match  
 To save himself against a coward arm'd  
 At one spear's length. O ever failing  
 trust  
 In mortal strength! and oh what not  
 in man  
 Deceivable and vain! Nay what thing  
 good  
 Pray'd for, but often proves our wo,  
 our bane?  
 I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness  
 In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a son,  
 And such a son as all men hail'd me  
 happy:  
 Who would be now a father in my  
 stead?  
 O wherefore did God grant me my request,  
 And as a blessing with such pomp  
 adorn'd?  
 Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt  
 Our earnest prayers, then given with  
 solemn hand  
 As graces draw a scorpion's tail behind?  
 For this did th' angels twice descend?  
 for this  
 Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant  
 Select, and sacred, glorious, for awhile  
 The miracle of men; then in an hour  
 Insnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led  
 bound,  
 Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and  
 blind,  
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with  
 slaves?  
 Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen  
 once  
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty  
 err,  
 He should not so o'erwhelm, as a thrall  
 Subject him to such foul indignities,

Be it but for honour's sake of former  
 deeds.

SAMSON.

Appoint not heavenly disposition,  
 father;  
 Nothing of all these evils hath befallen  
 me  
 But justly; I myself have brought them  
 on,  
 Sole author I, sole cause; if aught seem  
 vile,  
 As vile hath been my folly, who have  
 profan'd  
 The mystery of God given me under  
 pledge  
 Of vow, and have betray'd it to a  
 woman,  
 A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.  
 This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,  
 But warn'd by oft experience; did not  
 she  
 Of Timna first betray me, and reveal  
 The secret wrested from me in her  
 height  
 Of nuptial love profess'd, carrying it  
 straight  
 To them who had corrupted her, my  
 spies,  
 And rivals? In this other was there  
 found  
 More faith, who also in her prime of  
 love,  
 Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,  
 Though offer'd only, by the scent conceiv'd  
 Her spurious first-born; treason against  
 me?  
 Thrice she assay'd with flatt'ring prayers  
 and sighs,  
 And amorous reproaches, to win from  
 me  
 My capital secret, in what part my  
 strength  
 Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that  
 she might know;  
 Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport  
 Her importunity, each time perceiving  
 How openly, and with what impudence  
 She purpos'd to betray me, and (which  
 was worse

Than undissembled hate) with what contempt  
 She sought to make me traitor to myself;  
 Yet the fourth time, when mustering all her wiles,  
 With blandish'd parleys, feminine assaults,  
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night  
 To storm me, over-watch'd, and wearied out  
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,  
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,  
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd  
 Might easily have shook off all her snares:  
 But foul effeminacy held me yok'd  
 Her bond slave; O indignity, O blot  
 To honour and religion; servile mind  
 Rewarded well with servile punishment!  
 The base degree to which I now am fallen,  
 These rags, this grinding is not yet so base  
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,  
 That saw not how degenerately I serv'd.

## MANOAH.

I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son,  
 Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead  
 Divine impulsion, prompting how thou might'st  
 Find some occasion to infest our foes.  
 I state not that; this I am sure, our foes  
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee  
 Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner  
 Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms  
 To violate the secret trust of silence  
 Deposited within thee; which to have kept  
 Tacit, was in thy power; true; and thou bear'st

Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;  
 Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying  
 That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,  
 This day the Philistines a popular feast  
 Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim  
 Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud  
 To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd  
 Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,  
 Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.  
 So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,  
 Besides whom is no god, compar'd with idols,  
 Disglorified, blasphem'd, and had in scorn  
 By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;  
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,  
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest.  
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever  
 Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

## SAMSON.

Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
 That I this honour, I this pomp have brought  
 To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high  
 Among the Heathen round; to God have brought  
 Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths  
 Of idolists, and atheists; have brought scandal  
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt  
 In feeble hearts, propense enough before  
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols;  
 Which is my chief affliction, shame, and sorrow,  
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not  
 Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.

This only hope relieves me, that the  
 strife  
 With me hath end; all the contest is  
 now  
 'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath  
 presum'd,  
 Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,  
 His deity comparing and preferring  
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be  
 sure,  
 Will not connive, or linger, thus pro-  
 vok'd,  
 But will arise and his great name assert:  
 Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long  
 receive  
 Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil  
 him  
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me,  
 And with confusion blank his worship-  
 pers.

MANOAH.

With cause this hope relieves me, and  
 these words  
 I as a prophecy receive; For God,  
 Nothing more certain, will not long  
 defer  
 To vindicate the glory of his name  
 Against all competition, nor will long  
 Indure it doubtful whether God be  
 Lord,  
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be  
 done?  
 Thou must not in the meanwhile here  
 forget  
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight  
 Neglected. I already have made way  
 To some Philistian lords, with whom to  
 treat  
 About thy ransom; well they may by  
 this  
 Have satisfied their utmost of revenge  
 By pains and slaveries, worse than  
 death inflicted  
 On thee, who now no more canst do  
 them harm.

SAMSON.

Spare that proposal, father, spare the  
 trouble  
 Of that solicitation; let me here,  
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;  
 And expiate, if possible, my crime,

Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd  
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,  
 How heinous had the fact been, how  
 deserving  
 Contempt and scorn of all, to be ex-  
 cluded  
 All friendship, and avoided as a blab,  
 The mark of fool set on his front?  
 But I  
 God's counsel have not kept, his holy  
 secret  
 Presumptuously have publish'd, im-  
 piously,  
 Weakly at least, and shamefully: a sin  
 That Gentiles in their parables condemn  
 To their abyss and horrid pains con-  
 fin'd.

MANOAH.

Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,  
 But act not in thy own affliction, son;  
 Repent the sin, but if the punishment  
 Thou canst avoid, self-preservation  
 bids;  
 Or th' execution leave to high disposal,  
 And let another hand, not thine, exact  
 Thy penal forfeit from thyself; perhaps  
 God will relent, and quit thee all his  
 debt;  
 Who ever more approves and more  
 accepts  
 (Best pleas'd with humble and filial  
 submission)  
 Him who imploring mercy sues for life,  
 Than who self rigorous chooses death  
 as due;  
 Which argues over-just, and self-  
 displeas'd  
 For self-offence more than for God  
 offended.  
 Reject not then what offer'd means;  
 who knows  
 But God hath set before us, to return  
 thee  
 Home to thy country and his sacred  
 house,  
 Where thou mayst bring thy offerings  
 to avert  
 His further ire, with prayers and vows  
 renew'd?

SAMSON.

His pardon I implore; but as for life,

To what end should I seek it? when in  
 strength  
 All mortals I excell'd, and great in  
 hopes  
 With youthful courage and magnani-  
 mous thoughts  
 Of birth from heaven foretold and high  
 exploits,  
 Full of divine instinct, after some proof  
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond  
 The sons of Anak, famous now and  
 blaz'd,  
 Fearless of danger, like a petty god  
 I walk'd about admir'd of all, and  
 dreaded  
 On hostile ground, none daring my af-  
 front.  
 Then swoln with pride into the snare I  
 fell  
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,  
 Soften'd with pleasure and voluptuous  
 life;  
 At length to lay my head and hallow'd  
 pledge  
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap  
 Of a deceitful concubine, who shore  
 me,  
 Like a tame wether, all my precious  
 fleece,  
 Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,  
 Shaven and disarm'd among mine ene-  
 mies.

## CHORUS.

Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,  
 Which many a famous warrior over-  
 turns,  
 Thou couldst repress, nor did the danc-  
 ing ruby,  
 Sparkling, out pour'd the flavour or the  
 smell,  
 Or taste that cheers the hearts of gods  
 and men,  
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline  
 stream.

## SAMSON.

Wherever fountain or fresh current  
 flow'd  
 Against the eastern ray, translucent,  
 pure,  
 With touch ethereal of heaven's fiery  
 rod,

I drank, from the clear milky juice ar-  
 laying  
 Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envied them  
 the grape  
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills  
 with fumes.

## CHORUS.

O madness, to think use of strongest  
 wines  
 And strongest drinks our chief support  
 of health,  
 When God with these forbidden made  
 choice to rear  
 His mighty champion, strong above  
 compare,  
 Whose drink was only from the liquid  
 brook.

## SAMSON.

But what avail'd this temp'rance, not  
 complete  
 Against another object more enticing?  
 What boots it at one gate to make de-  
 fence,  
 And at another to let in the foe,  
 Effeminately vanquish'd? by which  
 means,  
 Now blind, dishearten'd, sham'd, dis-  
 honour'd, quell'd,  
 To what can I be useful, wherein serve  
 My nation, and the work from heaven  
 impos'd,  
 But to sit idle on the household hearth,  
 A burdensome drone; to visitants a  
 gaze,  
 Or pitied object, these redundant locks  
 Robustuous to no purpose clust'ring  
 down,  
 Vain monument of strength; till length  
 of years  
 And sedentary numbness craze my  
 limbs  
 To a contemptible old age obscure;  
 Here rather let me drudge and earn  
 my bread,  
 Till vermin or the draff of servile food  
 Consume me, and oft invocated death  
 Hasten the welcome end of all my  
 pains.



MANOAH.

Wilt thou then serve the Philistines  
with that gift

Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?

Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,  
Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age outworn.

But God who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer

From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst t' allay

After the brunt of battle, can as easy  
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,

Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;

And I persuade me so; why else this strength

Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?

His might continues in thee not for naught,

Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

SAMSON.

All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,

That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,

Nor th' other light of life continue long,  
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:

So much I feel my genial spirits droop,  
My hopes all flat, nature within me seems

In all her functions weary of herself,  
My race of glory run, and race of shame,

And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

MANOAH.

Believe not these suggestions which proceed

From anguish of the mind and humours black

That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,

Must not omit a father's timely care  
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance

By ransom, or how else: meanwhile be calm,

And healing words from these thy friends admit.

SAMSON.

O that torment should not be confin'd

To the body's wounds and sores,

With maladies innumerable

In heart, head, breast and reins;

But must secret passage find

To th' inmost mind,

There exercise all his fierce accidents,

And on her purest spirits prey,

As on entrails, joints and limbs,

With answerable pains but more intense,

Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me

As a ling'ring disease,

But finding no redress ferment and rage.

Nor less than wounds immedicable

Rankle, and fester, and gangrene

To black mortification.

Thoughts, my tormentors arm'd with deadly stings

Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,

Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise

Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb

Or medicinal liquor can assuage,

Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.

Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er  
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure:

Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once and choice delight,

His destin'd from the womb,

Promis'd by heavenly message twice descending;

Under his special eye

Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain,

He led me on to mightiest deeds

Above the nerve of mortal arm

Against th' uncircumcis'd, our enemies,

But now hath cast me off as never  
known,  
And to those cruel enemies,  
Whom I by his appointment had pro-  
vok'd,  
Left me all helpless with th' irreparable  
loss  
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated  
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.  
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;  
Noneless are all my evils, all remediless;  
This one prayer yet remains, might I be  
heard,  
No long petition, speedy death,  
The close of all my miseries, and the  
balm.

## CHORUS.

Many are the sayings of the wise,  
In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,  
Extolling patience as the truest forti-  
tude;  
And to the bearing well of all calami-  
ties,  
All chances incident to man's frail life,  
Consolatories writ  
With studied argument and much per-  
suasion sought,  
Lenient of grief and anxious thought:  
But with th' afflicted in his pangs their  
sound  
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune  
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his  
complaint,  
Unless he feel within  
Some source of consolation from  
above,  
Secret refreshings, that repair his  
strength,  
And fainting spirits uphold.  
God of our fathers, what is man!  
That thou tow'rd's him with hand so  
various,  
Or might I say contrarious,  
Temper'st thy providence through his  
short course.  
Not evenly as thou rul'st  
Th' angelic orders and inferior crea-  
tures mute,  
Irrational and brute.  
Nor do I name of men the common  
rout,  
That wand'ring loose about  
Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,

Heads without name no more remem-  
ber'd  
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,  
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd  
To some great work, thy glory,  
And people's safety, which in part they  
effect:  
Yet toward these thus dignified, thou  
oft,  
Amidst their height of noon,  
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand  
with no regard  
Of highest favours past  
From thee on them, or them to thee of  
service.  
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit  
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dis-  
mission,  
But throw'st them lower than thou didst  
exalt them high,  
Unseemly falls in human eye,  
Too grievous for the trespass or omis-  
sion;  
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword  
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses  
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else cap-  
tiv'd;  
Or to th' unjust tribunals, under change  
of times  
And condemnation of th' ungrateful  
multitude.  
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty  
With sickness and disease thou bow'st  
them down  
Painful diseases and deform'd,  
In crude old age:  
Though not disordinate, yet causeless  
suff'ring  
The punishment of dissolute days; in  
fine,  
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,  
For oft alike both come to evil end.  
So deal not with this once thy  
glorious champion,  
The image of thy strength, and mighty  
minister.  
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt  
already?  
Behold him in this state calamitous, and  
turn  
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful  
end.  
But who is this, what thing of sea or  
land?

Female of sex it seems,  
 That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,  
 Comes this way sailing  
 Like a stately ship  
 Of Tarsus, bound for th' isles  
 Of Javan or Gadire,  
 With all her bravery on, and tackle  
 trim,  
 Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,  
 Courted by all the winds that hold them  
 play,  
 An amber scent of odorous perfume  
 Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;  
 Some rich Philistian matron she may  
 seem,  
 And now at nearer view, no other cer-  
 tain  
 Than Dalila, thy wife.

SAMSON.

My wife, my trait'ress, let her not come  
 near me.

CHORUS.

Yet on she moves, now stands, and eyes  
 thee fix'd,  
 About t' have spoke, but now, with head  
 declin'd,  
 Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew,  
 she weeps,  
 And words address'd seem into tears  
 dissolved,  
 Wetting the borders of her silken veil:  
 But now again she makes address to  
 speak.

DALILA.

With doubtful feet and wavering reso-  
 lution  
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure,  
 Samson,  
 Which to have merited, without excuse,  
 I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears  
 May expiate (though the fact more  
 evil drew  
 In the perverse event than I foresaw)  
 My penance hath not slacken'd, though  
 my pardon  
 No way assur'd. But conjugal affection  
 Prevailing over fear, and timorous  
 doubt,

Hath led me on, desirous to behold  
 Once more thy face, and know of thy  
 estate,  
 If aught in my ability may serve  
 To lighten what thou suffer'st, and ap-  
 pease  
 Thy mind with what amends is in my  
 power,  
 Though late, yet in some part to recom-  
 pense  
 My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

SAMSON.

Out, out, hyæna; these are thy wonted  
 arts  
 And arts of every woman false like  
 thee,  
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive,  
 betray,  
 Then as repentant to submit, beseech,  
 And reconciliation move with feign'd  
 remorse,  
 Confess, and promise wonders in her  
 change,  
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try  
 Her husband, how far urg'd his patience  
 bears,  
 His virtue or weakness which way to  
 assail:  
 Then with more cautious and instructed  
 skill  
 Again transgresses, and again submits;  
 That wisest and best men full oft be-  
 guil'd  
 With goodness principled not to reject  
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,  
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,  
 Intangled with a pois'nous bosom snake,  
 If not by quick destruction soon cut off  
 As I by thee, to ages an example.

DALILA.

Yet hear me, Samson; not that I en-  
 deavour  
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
 But that on th' other side if it be  
 weigh'd  
 By itself, with aggravations not sur-  
 charg'd,  
 Or else with just allowance counter-  
 pois'd,  
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find

The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.

First granting, as I do, it was a weakness

In me, but incident to all our sex,

Curiosity, inquisitive, importune

Of secrets, then with like infirmity

To publish them, both common female faults:

Was it not weakness also to make known

For importunity, that is for naught,

Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?

To what I did thou show'dst me first the way,

But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not.

Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:

Ere I to thee, thou to thyself was cruel. Let weakness then with weakness come to parle

So near related, or the same of kind, Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine

The gentler, if severely thou exact not More strength from me, than in thyself was found.

And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,

The jealousy of love, powerful of sway In human hearts, nor less in mine tow'rds thee,

Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wouldst leave me

As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore

How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:

No better way I saw than by importuning

To learn thy secrets, get into my power The key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,

Why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those

Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd

Against thee but safe custody, and hold: That made for me; I knew that liberty Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,

While I at home sat full of cares and fears,

Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed; Here I should still enjoy thee day and night

Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',

Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad, Fearless at home of partners in my love.

These reasons in love's law have pass'd for good,

Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps:

And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,

Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.

Be not unlike all others, not austere

As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.

If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,

In uncompassionate anger do not so.

#### SAMSON.

How cunningly the sorceress displays Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine?

That malice not repentance brought thee hither,

By this appears; I gave, thou say'st, th' example,

I led the way; bitter reproach, but true; I to myself was false ere thou to me;

Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,

Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou see'st

Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,

Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather

Confess it feign'd; weakness is thy excuse,

And I believe it, weakness to resist

Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,

What murderer, what traitor, parricide, Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?

All wickedness is weakness: that plea, therefore,

With God or man will gain thee no remission.

But love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage

To satisfy thy lust; love seeks to have  
 love;  
 My love how couldst thou hope, who  
 took'st the way  
 To raise in me inexpiable hate,  
 Knowing, as needs I must, by thee be-  
 tray'd?  
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame  
 with shame,  
 Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st  
 more.

DALILA.

Since thou determin'st weakness for no  
 plea  
 In man or woman, though to thy own  
 condemning,  
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares  
 besides,  
 What sieges girt me round, ere I con-  
 sented;  
 Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd  
 of men,  
 The constantest, to have yielded without  
 blame.  
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou  
 lay'st,  
 That wrought with me: thou know'st  
 the magistrates  
 And princes of my country came in  
 person,  
 Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urged,  
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty  
 And of religion, press'd how just it was,  
 How honourable, how glorious to entrap  
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd  
 Such numbers of our nation: and the  
 priest  
 Was not behind but ever at my ear,  
 Preaching how meritorious with the  
 gods  
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious  
 Dishonourer of Dagon: what had I  
 To oppose against such powerful argu-  
 ments?  
 Only my love of thee held long debate,  
 And combated in silence all these rea-  
 sons  
 With hard contest: at length that  
 grounded maxim,  
 So rife and celebrated in the mouths  
 Of wisest men, that to the public good  
 Private respects must yield, with grave  
 authority.

Took full possession of me and pre-  
 vail'd;  
 Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty so  
 enjoining.

SAMSON.

I thought where all thy circling wiles  
 would end;  
 In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy.  
 But had thy love, still odiously pre-  
 tended,  
 Been as it ought, sincere, it would have  
 taught thee  
 Far other reasonings, brought forth  
 other deeds.  
 I, before all the daughters of my tribe  
 And of my nation, chose thee from  
 among  
 My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou  
 knew'st,  
 Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to  
 thee,  
 Not out of levity, but over-power'd  
 By thy request, who could deny thee  
 nothing,  
 Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why  
 then  
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy  
 husband,  
 Then, as since then, thy country's foe  
 profess'd?  
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to  
 leave  
 Parents and country; nor was I their  
 subject,  
 Nor under their protection but my own,  
 Thou mine, not theirs: if aught against  
 my life  
 Thy country sought of thee, it sought  
 unjustly,  
 Against the law of nature, law of na-  
 tions;  
 No more thy country but an impious  
 crew  
 Of men conspiring to uphold their state  
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating  
 the ends  
 For which our country is a name so  
 dear;  
 Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal  
 mov'd thee  
 To please thy gods thou didst it; gods  
 unable



T' acquit themselves and prosecute their  
foes  
But by ungodly deeds; the contradiction  
Of their own deity, gods cannot be;  
Less therefore to be pleased, obey'd, or  
fear'd,  
These false pretexts and varnish'd  
colours failing,  
Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou  
appear?

DALILA.

In argument with men a woman ever  
Goes by the worse, whatever be her  
cause.

SAMSON.

For want of words no doubt, or lack  
of breath;  
Witness when I was worried with thy  
peals.

DALILA.

I was a fool, too rash, and quite mis-  
taken  
In what I thought would have succeeded  
best.  
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee,  
Samson,  
Afford me place to show what recom-  
pense  
Tow'rd's thee I intend for what I have  
misdone,  
Misguided; only what remains past cure.  
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist  
To afflict thyself in vain: though sight  
be lost,  
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd,  
Where other senses want not their de-  
lights,  
At home, in leisure and domestic ease,  
Exempt from many a care and chance  
to which  
Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.  
I to the lords will intercede, not doubt-  
ing  
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch  
thee  
From forth this loathsome prison-house,  
to abide  
With me, where my redoubled love and  
care

With nursing diligence, to me glad  
office,  
May ever tend about thee to old age  
With all things grateful cheer'd, and so  
supplied,  
That what by me thou hast lost thou  
least shall miss.

SAMSON.

No, no, of my condition take no care,  
It fits not; thou and I long since are  
twain;  
Nor think me so unwary or accurs'd,  
To bring my feet again into the snare  
Where once I have been caught; I know  
thy trains,  
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and  
toils;  
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling  
charms  
No more on me have power, their force  
is null'd,  
So much of adder's wisdom I have  
learn'd  
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.  
If in my flower of youth and strength,  
when all men  
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone  
couldst hate me,  
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and  
forego me;  
How wouldst thou use me now, blind,  
and thereby  
Deceivable, in most things as a child  
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and  
scorn'd,  
And last neglected? How wouldst thou  
insult.  
When I must live uxorious to thy will  
In perfect thralldom, how again betray  
me,  
Bearing my words and doings to the  
lords  
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or  
smile?  
This jail I count the house of liberty  
To thine, whose doors my feet shall  
never enter.

DALILA.

Let me approach at least, and touch thy  
hand.

SAMSON.

Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake  
 My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.  
 At distance I forgive thee, go with that;  
 Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works  
 It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
 Among illustrious women, faithful wives:  
 Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold  
 Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.

DALILA.

I see thou art implacable, more deaf  
 To prayers than winds and seas, yet winds to seas  
 Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore;  
 Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,  
 Eternal tempest never to be calm'd.  
 Why do I humble thus myself, and suing  
 For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?  
 Bid go with evil omen and the brand  
 Of infamy upon my name denounc'd?  
 To mix with thy concerns I desist  
 Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.  
 Fame, if not double fac'd is double mouth'd.  
 And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;  
 On both his wings, one black, the other white,  
 Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.  
 My name perhaps among the circumcised  
 In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,  
 To all posterity may stand defam'd,  
 With malediction mention'd, and the blot  
 Of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.  
 But in my country, where I most desire,  
 In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,  
 I shall be nam'd among the famous  
 Of women, sung at solemn festivals.  
 Living and dead recorded, who to save

Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose  
 Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb  
 With odours visited, and annual flow'ers;  
 Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim  
 Jael, who with inhospitable guile  
 Smote Siserā sleeping, through the temples nail'd,  
 Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy  
 The public marks of honour and reward  
 Conferr'd upon me, for the piety  
 Which to my country I was judg'd to have shown  
 At this who ever envies or repines,  
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

CHORUS.

She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting  
 Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

SAMSON.

So let her go, God sent her to debase me,  
 And aggravate my folly, who committed  
 To such a viper his most sacred trust  
 Of secrecy, my safety and my life.

CHORUS.

Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,  
 After offence returning, to regain  
 Love once possess'd nor can be easily  
 Repuls'd without much inward passion felt  
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

SAMSON.

Love quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,  
 Not wedlock-treach'ry endangering life.

CHORUS.

It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,  
 Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit  
 That woman's love can win or long inherit;

But what it is, hard is to say,  
 Harder to hit,  
 (Which way soever men refer it.)  
 Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one  
 day,  
 Or seven, though one should musing  
 sit.  
 If any of these or all, the Timnian  
 bride  
 Had not so soon preferr'd  
 Thy paranymp, worthless to thee com-  
 par'd  
 Successor in thy bed,  
 Nor but so loosely disallied  
 Their nuptials, not this last so treacher-  
 ously  
 Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.  
 Is it for that such outward ornament  
 Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward  
 gifts  
 Were left for haste unfinish'd, judg-  
 ment scant,  
 Capacity not rais'd to apprehend  
 Or value what is best  
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the  
 wrong?  
 Or was too much of self-love mix'd,  
 Of constancy no root infix'd,  
 That either they love nothing, or not  
 long?  
 Whate'er it be to wisest men and best,  
 Seeming at first all heavenly under  
 virgin veil,  
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,  
 Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a  
 thorn  
 Intestine, far within defensive arms  
 A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue  
 Adverse and turbulent, or by her  
 charms  
 Draws him awry enslav'd  
 With dotage, and his sense deprav'd  
 To folly and shameful deeds which  
 ruin ends.  
 What pilot so expert but needs must  
 wreck  
 Embark'd with such a steersmate at the  
 helm?  
 Favour'd of heaven who finds  
 One virtuous rarely found,  
 That in domestic good combines:  
 Happy that house! his way to peace is  
 smooth.  
 But virtue which breaks through all  
 opposition,

And all temptation can remove,  
 Most shines and most is acceptable  
 above.

Therefore God's universal law  
 Gave to the man despotic power  
 Over his female in due awe,  
 Not from that right to part an hour,  
 Smile she or lour:  
 So shall he least confusion draw  
 On his whole life, not sway'd  
 By female usurpation, or dismay'd.  
 But had we best retire, I see a storm?

SAMSON.

Fair days have oft contracted wind and  
 rain.

CHORUS.

But this another kind of tempest brings.

SAMSON.

Be less abstruse, my riddling days are  
 past.

CHORUS.

Look now for no enchanting voice, nor  
 fear  
 The bait of honied words; a rougher  
 tongue  
 Draws hitherwards, I know him by his  
 stride,  
 The giant Harapha of Gath, his look  
 Haughty as is his pile high-built and  
 proud.  
 Comes he in peace? what wind hath  
 blown him hither  
 I less conjecture than when first I saw  
 The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:  
 His habit carries peace, his brow de-  
 fiance.

SAMSON.

Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

CHORUS.

His fraught we soon shall know, he  
 now arrives.

HARAPHA.

I come not, Samson, to condole thy  
 chance

As these perhaps, yet wish it had not  
been,

Though for no friendly intent. I am  
of Gath:

Men call me Harapha, of stock re-  
nown'd

As Og or Anak and the Emims old  
That Kiriathaim held, thou know'st me  
now

If thou at all art known. Much I have  
heard

Of thy prodigious might and feats per-  
form'd

Incredible to me, in this displeas'd  
That I was never present on the place  
Of those encounters, where we might  
have tried

Each other's force in camp or listed  
field:

And now am come to see of whom  
such noise

Hath walk'd about, and each limb to  
survey,

If thy appearance answer loud report.

SAMSON.

The way to know were not to see but  
taste.

HARAPHA.

Dost thou already single me? I thought  
Gyves and the mill had tam'd thee. O  
that fortune

Had brought me to the field, where  
thou art fam'd

To have wrought such wonders with  
an ass's jaw;

I should have forc'd thee soon wish  
other arms,

Or left thy carcass where the ass lay  
thrown:

So had the glory of prowess been re-  
cover'd

To Palestine, won by a Philistine  
From the unforeskin'd race, of whom  
thou bear'st

The highest name for valiant acts; that  
honour

Certain to have won by mortal duel  
from thee,

I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

SAMSON.

Boast not of what thou would'st have  
done, but do

What then thou wouldst, thou seest it  
in thy hand.

HARAPHA.

To combat with a blind man I disdain,  
And thou hast need much washing to  
be touch'd.

SAMSON.

Such usage as your honourable lords  
Afford me, assassinated and betray'd,  
Who durst not with their whole united  
powers

In fight withstand me single and un-  
arm'd,

Nor in the house with chamber am-  
bushes

Close-banded durst attack me, no not  
sleeping,

Till they had hir'd a woman with their  
gold

Breaking her marriage faith to circum-  
vent me.

Therefore without feign'd shifts let be  
assign'd

Some narrow place enclos'd where sight  
may give thee,

Or rather flight, no great advantage on  
me;

Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy  
helmet

And brigandine of brass, thy broad  
habergeon,

Vant-brass and greaves, and gauntlet,  
add thy spear,

A weaver's beam, and seven-times-  
folded shield,

I only with an oaken staff will meet  
thee

And raise such outcries on thy clatter'd  
iron,

Which long shall not withhold me from  
thy head,

That in a little time while breath re-  
mains thee,

Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to  
boast

Again in safety what thou wouldst have  
done

To Samson, but shalt never see Gath  
more.

HARAPHA.

Thou durst not thus disparage glorious  
arms  
Which greatest heroes have in battle  
worn,  
Their ornament and safety, had not  
spells  
And black enchantments, some ma-  
gician's art  
Armed thee, or charmed thee strong  
which thou from heaven  
Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in  
thy hair,  
Where strength can least abide, though  
all thy hairs  
Were bristles, rang'd like those that  
ridge the back  
Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcu-  
pines.

SAMSON.

I know no spells, use no forbidden arts:  
My trust is in the living God, who gave  
me  
At my nativity this strength, diffus'd  
No less through all my sinews, joints  
and bones,  
Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks  
unshorn,  
The pledge of my unviolated vow.  
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god.  
Go to his temple, invoke his aid  
With solemnest devotion, spread before  
him  
How highly it concerns his glory now  
To frustrate and dissolve these magic  
spells,  
Which I to be the power of Israel's  
God  
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,  
Offering to combat thee his champion  
bold  
With th' utmost of his godhead se-  
conded:  
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy  
sorrow  
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine  
or mine.

HARAPHA.

Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be,  
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath  
cut off  
Quite from his people, and deliver'd up  
Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them  
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd  
send thee  
Into the common prison, there to grind  
Among the slaves and asses, thy com-  
rades,  
As good for nothing else, no better  
service  
With those thy boist'rous locks, no  
worthy match  
For valour to assail, nor by the sword  
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,  
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

SAMSON.

All these indignities, for such they are  
From thine, these evils I deserve and  
more,  
Acknowledge them from God inflicted  
on me  
Justly, yet despair not of his final par-  
don.  
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye  
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;  
In confidence whereof I once again  
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,  
By combat to decide whose god is God.  
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons  
adore.

HARAPHA.

Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in  
trusting  
He will accept thee to defend his cause,  
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber.

SAMSON.

Tongue-doughty Giant, how dost thou  
prove me these?

HARAPHA.

Is not thy nation subject to our lords?  
Their magistrates confess'd it, when  
they took thee



As a league-breaker, and deliver'd  
bound  
Into our hands: for hadst thou not  
committed  
Notorious murder on those thirty men  
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,  
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of  
their robes?  
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke  
the league,  
Went up with armèd powers thee only  
seeking,  
To others did no violence nor spoil.

SAMSON.

Among the daughters of the Philistines  
I chose a wife, which argued me no  
foe;  
And in your city held my nuptial feast:  
But your ill-meaning politician lords,  
Under pretence of bridal friends and  
guests,  
Appointed to await me thirty spies,  
Who threat'ning cruel death constrain'd  
the bride  
To wring from me and tell to them my  
secret,  
That solv'd the riddle which I had pro-  
pos'd  
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,  
As on thy enemies, wherever chanc'd  
I us'd hostility, and took their spoil  
To pay my underminers in their coin.  
My nation was subjected to your lords.  
It was the force of conquest; force with  
force  
Is well ejected, when the conquer'd can.  
But I a private person, whom my  
country,  
As a league-breaker, gave up bound,  
presum'd  
Single rebellion and did hostile acts;  
I was no private but a person rais'd  
With strength sufficient and command  
from Heav'n  
To free my country; if their servile  
minds  
Me their deliverer sent would not re-  
ceive,  
But to their masters gave me up for  
naught,  
Th' unworthier they; whence to this  
day they serve,

I was to do my part from heaven  
assign'd,  
And had perform'd it if my known  
offence  
Had not disabled me, not all your force:  
These shifts refuted, answer thy ap-  
pellant,  
Though by his blindness maim'd for  
high attempts,  
Who now defies thee thrice to single  
fight,  
As a petty enterprize, of small enforce.

HARAPHA.

With thee a man condemn'd, a slave  
enroll'd,  
Due by the law to capital punishment?  
To fight with thee no man of arms will  
deign.

SAMSON.

Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to  
survey me,  
To descant on my strength, and give  
thy verdict?  
Come nearer, part not hence so slight  
inform'd;  
But take good heed my hand survey not  
thee.

HARAPHA.

O Baal-zebul! can my ears unus'd  
Hear these dishonours, and not render  
death?

SAMSON.

No man withholds thee, nothing from  
thy hand  
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,  
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

HARAPHA.

This insolence other kind of answer fits.

SAMSON.

Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,  
Though in these chains, bulk without  
spirit vast,  
And with one buffet lay thy structure  
low,

Or swing thee in the air, then dash  
thee down  
To the hazard of thy brains and shat-  
ter'd sides.

HARAPHA.

By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament  
These braveries in irons loaden on thee.

CHORUS.

His giantship is gone somewhat crest-  
fallen,  
Stalking with less unconscionable  
strides,  
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

SAMSON.

I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood  
Though fame divulge him Father of five  
sons,  
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

CHORUS.

He will directly to the lords, I fear,  
And with malicious counsel stir them up  
Some way or other yet further to  
afflict thee.

SAMSON.

He must allege some cause, and offer'd  
fight  
Will not dare mention, lest a question  
rise  
Whether he durst accept the offer or  
not,  
And that he durst not plain enough ap-  
pear'd.  
Much more affliction than already felt  
They can not well impose, nor I sustain,  
If they intend advantage of my labours,  
The work of many hands which earns  
my keeping  
With no small profit daily to my own-  
ers.  
But come what will, my deadliest foe  
will prove  
My speediest friend, by death to rid me  
hence.  
The worst that he can give, to me the  
best.

Yet so it may fall out, because their end  
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruin who attempt the  
deed.

CHORUS.

O how comely it is, and how reviving  
For the spirits of just men long op-  
press'd,  
When God into the hands of their de-  
liverer  
Puts invincible might  
To quell the mighty of the earth, th'  
oppressor,  
The brute and boist'rous force of vio-  
lent men  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue  
The righteous, and all such as honour  
truth:  
He all their ammunition  
And feats of war defeats  
With plain heroic magnitude of mind,  
And celestial vigour arm'd,  
Their armouries and magazines con-  
tents,  
Renders them useless, while  
With winged expedition  
Swift as the lightning glance he exe-  
cutes  
His errand on the wicked, who sur-  
pris'd  
Lose their defence distracted and  
amazed.  
But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,  
Making them each his own deliverer,  
And victor over all  
That tyranny or fortune can inflict,  
Either of these is in thy lot,  
Samson, with might indued  
Above the sons of men; but sight be-  
reav'd  
May chance to number thee with those  
Whom patience finally must crown.  
This idol's day hath been to thee no  
day of rest,  
Labouring thy mind  
More than the working day thy hands.  
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,  
For I descry this way  
Some other tending, in his hand  
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,  
Comes on amain, speed in his look.

By his habit I discern him now  
A public officer, and now at hand.  
His message will be short and voluble.

OFFICER.

Hebrews, the pris'ner Samson here I  
seek.

CHORUS.

His manacles remark him, there he sits.

OFFICER.

Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me  
say :

This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,  
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and  
games ;

Thy strength they know surpassing  
human rate,

And now some public proof thereof  
require

To honour this great feast, and great  
assembly ;

Rise therefore, with all speed and come  
along,

Where I will see thee hearten'd and  
fresh clad

To appear as fits before th' illustrious  
lords.

SAMSON.

Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, there-  
fore tell them,

Our law forbids at their religious rites  
My presence ; for that cause I cannot  
come.

OFFICER.

This answer, be assur'd, will not con-  
tent them.

SAMSON.

Have they not sword-players, and every  
sort

Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders,  
runners,

Jugglers and dancers, antics, mum-  
mers, mimics,

But they must pick me out with shackles  
tir'd,

And over-labour'd at their public mill,  
To make them sport with blind activity ?

Do they not seek occasion of new quar-  
rels

On my refusal to distress me more,  
Or make a game of my calamities ?

Return the way thou cam'st, I will not  
come.

OFFICER.

Regard thyself, this will offend them  
highly.

SAMSON.

Myself ! my conscience and internal  
peace,

Can they think me so broken, so de-  
bas'd

With corporal servitude, that my mind  
ever

Will condescend to such absurd com-  
mands ?

Although their drudge, to be their fool  
or jester,

And in my midst of sorrow and heart  
grief

To show them feats, and play before  
their god,

The worst of all indignities, yet on me  
Join'd with extreme contempt ? I will  
not come.

OFFICER.

My message was impos'd on me with  
speed,

Brooks no delay : is this thy resolution ?

SAMSON.

So take it with what speed thy message  
needs.

OFFICER.

I am sorry what this stoutness will  
produce.

SAMSON.

Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow  
indeed.

## CHORUS.

Consider, Samson; matters now are  
strain'd  
Up to the height, whether to hold or  
break;  
He's gone, and who knows how he may  
report  
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?  
Expect another message more imperi-  
ous,  
More loudly thund'ring than thou well  
wilt bear.

## SAMSON.

Shall I abuse this consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my  
hair  
After my great transgression, so requite  
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin  
By prostituting holy things to idols;  
A Nazarite in place abominable,  
Vaunting my strength in honour to their  
Dagon?  
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridicu-  
lous,  
What act more execrably unclean, pro-  
fane?

## CHORUS.

Yet with this strength thou serv'st the  
Philistines,  
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

## SAMSON.

Not in their idol-worship, but by labour  
Honest and lawful to deserve my food  
Of those who have me in their civil  
power.

## CHORUS.

Where the heart joins not, outward acts  
defile not.

## SAMSON.

Where outward force constrains, the  
sentence holds.  
But who constrains me to the temple of  
Dagon,  
Not dragging? the Philistian lords  
command.

Commands are no constraints. If I  
obey them,  
I do it freely, vent'ring to displease  
God for the fear of man, and man  
prefer,  
Set God behind: which in his jealousy  
Shall never, unrepented, find forgive-  
ness.  
Yet that he may dispense with me or  
thee  
Present in temples at idolatrous rites  
For some important cause, thou need'st  
not doubt.

## CHORUS.

How thou wilt here come off surmounts  
my reach.

## SAMSON.

Be of good courage, I begin to feel  
Some rousing motions in me which dis-  
pose  
To something extraordinary my  
thoughts.  
I with this messenger will go along,  
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dis-  
honour  
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.  
If there be aught of presage in the  
mind,  
This day will be remarkable in my life  
By some great act, or of my days the  
last.

## CHORUS.

In time thou hast resolv'd, the man  
returns.

## OFFICER.

Samson, this second message from our  
lords  
To thee I am bid say: Art thou our  
slave,  
Our captive, at the public mill our  
drudge,  
And dar'st thou at our sending and  
command  
Dispute thy coming? come without de-  
lay;  
Or we shall find such engines to assail  
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of  
force,

Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than  
a rock.

SAMSON.

I could be well content to try their art,  
Which to no few of them would prove  
pernicious,

Yet knowing their advantages too many,  
Because they shall not trail me through  
their streets

Like a wild beast, I am content to go,  
Masters' commands come with a power  
resistless

To such as owe them absolute subjec-  
tion;

And for a life who will not change his  
purpose?

(So mutable are all the ways of men,)  
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

OFFICER.

I praise thy resolution: doff these  
links:

By this compliance thou wilt win the  
lords

To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

SAMSON.

Brethren, farewell; your company along  
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend  
them

To see me girt with friends; and how  
the sight

Of me as of a common enemy,  
So dreaded once, may now exasperate  
them

I know not: lords are lordliest in their  
wine;

And the well-feasted priest then soonest  
fir'd

With zeal, if aught religion seem con-  
cern'd;

No less the people on their holy days  
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable;

Happen what may, of me expect to hear  
Nothing dishonourable, impure, un-  
worthy

Our God, our law, my nation, or myself,  
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

CHORUS.

Go, and the Holy One  
Of Israel be thy guide  
To what may serve his glory best, and  
spread his name

Great among the heathen round;  
Send thee the angel of thy birth to  
stand

Fast by thy side, who from thy father's  
field,

Rode up in flames after this message  
told

Of thy conception, and be now a shield  
Of fire; that Spirit that first rushed on  
thee

In the camp of Dan  
Be efficacious in thee now at need;

For never was from heaven imparted  
Measure of strength so great to mortal  
seed,

As in thy wondrous actions hath been  
seen.

But wherefore comes old Manoah in  
such haste

With youthful steps? much livelier than  
erewhile

He seems; supposing here to find his  
son.

Or of him bringing to us some glad  
news?

MANOAH.

Peace with you, brethren; my induce-  
ment hither

Was not at present here to find my son.  
By order of the lords new parted hence

To come and play before them at their  
feast.

I heard all as I came, the city rings,  
And numbers thither flock, I had no  
will,

Lest I should see him forc'd to things  
unseemly.

But that which mov'd my coming now,  
was chiefly

To give ye part with me what hope I  
have

With good success to work his liberty.

CHORUS.

That hope would much rejoice us to  
partake



With thee; say, reverend Sire we thirst  
to hear.

MANOAH.

I have attempted one by one the lords  
Either at home, or through the high  
street passing,  
With supplication prone and father's  
tears,  
To accept of ransom for my son their  
pris'ner.  
Some much averse I found and won-  
drous harsh,  
Contemptuous proud, set on revenge and  
spite;  
That part most reverenc'd Dagon and  
his priests:  
Others more moderate seeming, but  
their aim  
Private reward, for which both God and  
state  
They easily would set to sail; a third  
More generous far and civil, who con-  
fess'd  
They had enough reveng'd, having re-  
duc'd  
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,  
The rest was magnanimity to remit,  
If some convenient ransom were pre-  
pos'd.  
What noise or shout was that? it tore  
the sky.

CHORUS.

Doubtless the people shouting to behold  
Their once great dread, captive, and  
blind before them,  
Or at some proof of strength before  
them shown.

MANOAH.

His ransom, if my whole inheritance  
May compass it, shall willingly be paid  
And number'd down: much rather I  
shall choose  
To live the poorest in my tribe, than  
richest,  
And he in that calamitous prison left.  
No, I am fix'd not to part hence without  
him.  
For his redemption all my patrimony  
If need be, I am ready to forego

And quit: not wanting him, I shall want  
nothing.

CHORUS.

Fathers are wont to lay up for their  
sons.  
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all;  
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old  
age,  
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse  
thy son  
Made older than thy age through eye-  
sight last.

MANOAH.

It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,  
And view him sitting in the house, en-  
nobled  
With all those high exploits by him  
achiev'd,  
And on his shoulders waving down  
those locks,  
That of a nation arm'd the strength  
contain'd:  
And I persuade me God had not per-  
mitted  
His strength again to grow up with his  
hair  
Garrison'd round about him like a camp  
Of faithful soldiery were not his pur-  
pose  
To use him further yet in some great  
service,  
Not to sit idle with so great a gift  
Useless, and thence ridiculous about  
him.  
And since his strength with eye-sight  
was not lost,  
God will restore his eye-sight to his  
strength.

CHORUS.

Thy hopes are not ill-founded, nor  
seem vain  
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon  
Conceiv'd agreeable to a father's love,  
In both, which we, as next, participate.

MANOAH.

I know your friendly minds and—O  
what noise?

Mercy of heaven, what hideous noise  
was that?

Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

CHORUS.

Noise call you it or universal groan,  
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd!  
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in  
that noise,

Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

MANOAH.

Of ruin indeed, methought I heard the  
noise,

Oh it continues, they have slain my son.

CHORUS.

Thy son is rather slaying them, that  
outcry  
From slaughter of one foe could not  
ascend.

MANOAH.

Some dismal accident it needs must be;  
What shall we do, stay here or run and  
see?

CHORUS.

Best keep together here, lest running  
thither

We unawares run into danger's mouth.  
This evil on the Philistines is fallen;  
From whom could else a general cry  
be heard?

The sufferers then will scarce molest us  
here,

From other hands we need not much  
to fear,

What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's  
God

Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,  
He now be dealing dole among his foes,  
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk  
his way?

MANOAH.

That were a joy presumptuous to be  
thought.

CHORUS.

Yet God hath wrought things as in-  
credible

For his people of old; what hinders  
now?

MANOAH.

He can I know, but doubt to think he  
will;

Yet hope would fain subscribe, and  
tempts belief.

A little stay will bring some notice  
hither.

CHORUS.

Of good or bad so great, of bad the  
sooner;

For evil news rides post, while good  
news baits.

And to our wish I see one hither speed-  
ing,

An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our  
tribe.

MESSENGER.

O whither shall I run, or which way  
fly

The sight of this so horrid spectacle,  
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet be-  
hold?

For dire imagination still pursues me.  
But providence or instinct of nature  
seems,

Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce  
consulted,

To have guided me aright, I know not  
how,

To thee first reverend Manoah, and to  
these

My countrymen, whom here I knew re-  
maining,

As at some distance from the place  
of horror,

So in the sad event too much con-  
cern'd.

MANOAH.

The accident was loud, and here before  
thee

With rueful cry, yet what it was we  
hear not:  
No preface needs, thou seest we long  
to know.

MESSENGER.

It would burst forth, but I recover  
breath  
And sense distract, to know well what  
I utter.

MANOAH.

Tell us the sum, the circumstance de-  
fer.

MESSENGER.

Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are  
fallen,  
All in a moment overwhelm'd and  
fallen.

MANOAH.

Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not  
saddest  
The desolation of a hostile city.

MESSENGER.

Feed on that first, there may in grief  
be surfeit.

MANOAH.

Relate by whom.

MESSENGER.

By Samson.

MANOAH.

That still lessens  
The sorrow and converts it nigh to joy.

MESSENGER.

Ah, Manoah, I refrain too suddenly  
To utter what will come at last too  
soon:  
Lest evil tidings with too rude irrup-  
tion

Hitting thy agèd ear should pierce too  
deep.

MANOAH.

Suspense in news is torture, speak them  
out.

MESSENGER.

Take then the worst in brief, Samson  
is dead.

MANOAH.

The worst indeed, O all my hope's de-  
feated  
To free him hence! but death who sets  
all free  
Hath paid his ransom now and full  
discharge.  
What windy joy this day had I con-  
ceiv'd  
Hopeful of his delivery, which now  
proves  
Abortive as the first-born bloom of  
spring  
Nipp'd with the lagging rear of win-  
ter's frost!  
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say  
first,  
How died he; death to life is crown or  
shame  
All by him fell thou say'st, by whom  
fell he,  
What glorious hand gave Samson his  
death wound?

MESSENGER.

Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

MANOAH.

Wearied with slaughter then or how?  
Explain.

MESSENGER.

By his own hands.

MANOAH.

Self-violence! what cause  
Brought him so soon at variance with  
himself  
Among his foes?

## MESSENGER.

Inevitable cause  
At once both to destroy and be de-  
stroy'd;  
The edifice, where all were met to see  
him,  
Upon their heads and on his own he  
pull'd.

## MANOAH.

O lastly over-strong against thyself!  
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy re-  
venge.  
More than enough we know; but while  
things yet  
Are in confusion, give us if thou  
canst,  
Eye-witness of what first or last was  
done,  
Relation more particular and distinct.

## MESSENGER.

Occasions drew me early to this city,  
And as the gates I enter'd with sunrise,  
The morning trumpets festival pro-  
claim'd  
Through each high street: little I had  
despatch'd,  
When all abroad was rumour'd that this  
day  
Samson should be brought forth, to  
show the people  
Proof of his mighty strength in feats  
and games;  
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but  
minded  
Not to be absent at that spectacle.  
The building was a spacious theatre  
Half-round on two main pillars vaulted  
high,  
With seats where all the lords and each  
degree  
Of sort, might sit in order to behold;  
The other side was open, where the  
throne  
On banks and scaffolds under sky  
might stand;  
He among these aloof obscurely stood.  
The feast and noon grew high, and  
sacrifice  
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high  
cheer and wine,

When to their sports they turn'd. Im-  
mediately  
Was Samson as a public servant  
brought,  
In their state livery clad; before him  
pipes  
And timbrels, on each side went armed  
guards,  
Both horse and foot, before him and  
behind  
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and  
spears.  
At sight of him the people with a shout  
Rifted the air, clamouring their god  
with praise,  
Who had made their dreadful enemy  
their thrall.  
He, patient but undaunted, where they  
led him,  
Came to the place, and what was set  
before him,  
Which without help of eye might be  
assay'd  
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still  
perform'd,  
All with incredible, stupendous force:  
None daring to appear antagonist.  
At length for intermission sake they  
led him  
Between the pillars; he his guide re-  
quested  
(For so from such as nearer stood we  
heard)  
As over-tir'd to let him lean a while  
With both his arms on those two  
massy pillars,  
That to the arch'd roof gave main sup-  
port.  
He unsuspecting led him; which when  
Samson  
Felt in his arms, with head a while  
inclin'd,  
And eyes fast fix'd he stood, as one who  
pray'd,  
Or some great matter in his mind re-  
volv'd:  
At last with head erect thus cried aloud,  
"Hitherto, lords, what your commands  
impos'd  
I have perform'd, as reason was, obey-  
ing,  
Not without wonder or delight beheld:  
Now 'of my own accord such other  
trial

I mean to show you of my strength,  
 yet greater  
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.  
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,  
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,  
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars  
 With horrible convulsion to and fro,  
 He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came and drew  
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder  
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,  
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only  
 Of this but each Philistian city round,  
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.  
 Samson with these inmix'd, inevitably  
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;  
 The vulgar only scap'd who stood without.

## CHORUS.

O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!  
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd  
 The work for which thou wast foretold  
 To Israel, and now liest victorious  
 Among thy slain self-kill'd,  
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold  
 Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd  
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more  
 Than all thy life had slain before.

## SEMICHORUS.

While their hearts were jocund and sublime,  
 Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine  
 And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,  
 Chaunting their idol, and preferring  
 Before our living Dread who dwells  
 In Silo his bright sanctuary:  
 Among them He a spirit of frenzy sent  
 Who hurt their minds  
 And urg'd them on with mad desire  
 To call in haste for their destroyer;

They only set on sport and play  
 Unweetingly importun'd  
 Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.  
 So fond are mortal men  
 Fallen into wrath divine  
 As their own ruin on themselves to invite,  
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,  
 And with blindness internal struck.

## SEMICHORUS.

But he though blind of sight,  
 Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,  
 With inward eyes illuminated,  
 His fiery virtue rous'd  
 From under ashes into sudden flame,  
 And as an evening dragon came  
 Assailant on the perch'd roosts,  
 And nests in order rang'd  
 Of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle  
 His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.  
 So virtue given for lost,  
 Depress'd, and overthrown, as seem'd,  
 Like that self-begotten bird  
 In the Arabian woods imboss'd,  
 That no second knows nor third,  
 And lay erewhile a holocaust,  
 From out her ashy womb now teem'd,  
 Revives, re flourishes, then vigorous most  
 When most unactive deem'd.  
 And though her body die, her fame survives  
 A secular bird ages of lives.

## MANOAH.

Come, come; no time for lamentation now,  
 Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself  
 Like Samson, and heroically hath finish'd  
 A life heroic, on his enemies  
 Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,  
 And lamentations to the sons of Caph-tor  
 Through all Philistian bounds; to Israel  
 Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them  
 Find courage to lay hold on this occasion,



To himself and father's house eternal  
 fame;  
 And which is best and happiest yet, all  
 this  
 With God not parted from him, as was  
 fear'd.  
 But favouring and assisting to the end.  
 Nothing is here for tears, nothing to  
 wail  
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no  
 contempt.  
 Dispraise or blame, nothing but well  
 and fair,  
 And what may quiet us in a death so  
 noble.  
 Let us go find the body where it lies  
 Soak'd in his enemies' blood, and from  
 the stream  
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs  
 wash off  
 The clotted gore. I with what speed  
 the while  
 (Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)  
 Will send for all my kindred, all my  
 friends,  
 To fetch him hence, and solemnly at-  
 tend  
 With silent obsequy and funeral train  
 Home to his father's house: there will  
 I build him  
 A monument, and plant it round with  
 shade  
 Of laurel ever green, and branching  
 palm,

With all his trophies hung, and acts  
 enroll'd  
 In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.  
 Thither shall all the valiant youth re-  
 sort,  
 And from his memory inflame their  
 breasts  
 To matchless valour and adventures  
 high:  
 The virgins also shall on feastful days  
 Visit his tomb with flowers, only be-  
 wailing  
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

## CHORUS.

All is best, though we oft doubt  
 What th' unsearchable dispose  
 Of highest wisdom brings about,  
 And ever best found in the close.  
 Oft he seems to hide his face,  
 But unexpectedly returns,  
 And to his faithful champion hath in  
 place  
 Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza  
 mourns  
 And all that band them to resist  
 His uncontrollable intent;  
 His servants he with new acquist  
 Of true experience from this great  
 event  
 With peace and consolation hath dis-  
 missed,  
 And calm of mind all passion spent.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674).



DAVID AND GOLIATH  
A SACRED DRAMA



# DAVID AND GOLIATH

## A SACRED DRAMA.

*O bienheureux mille fois,  
L'Enfant que le Seigneur aime,  
Qui de bonne heure entend sa voix,  
Et que ce Dieu diagne instruire lui-  
même!  
Loin du monde eleve; de tous les dons  
des Cœur,  
Il est orne des sa naissance;  
Et du mechant l'abord contagieux  
N'altère point son innocence.—ATHALIE.*

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SAUL, *king of Israel.*

ABNER, *his general.*

JESSE.

ELIAB,

ABINADAB, } sons of Jesse.

DAVID,

GOLIATH, *the Philistian giant.*

*Philistines, Israelites, &c., &c.*

*Chorus of Hebrew women.*

*The scene lies in the camp in the valley  
of Elah, and the adjacent plain.*

The subject is taken from the seventh  
chapter of the First Book of Samuel.

### PART I.

SCENE—A shepherd's tent on a  
plain.

DAVID, *under a spreading tree, plays  
on his harp and sings.*

#### I.

GREAT Lord of all things! Pow'r di-  
vine!

Breathe on this erring heart of mine  
Thy grace serene and pure;  
Defend my frail, my erring youth,  
And teach me this important truth,  
The humble are secure!

#### II.

Teach me to bless my lowly lot,  
Confin'd to this paternal cot,  
Remote from regal state!

Content to court the cooling glade,  
Inhale the breeze, enjoy the shade,  
And love my humble fate.

#### III.

No anxious vigils here I keep,  
No dreams of gold distract my sleep,  
Nor lead my heart astray;  
Nor blasting Envy's tainted gale  
Pollutes the pleasures of the vale,  
To vex my harmless day.

#### IV.

Yon tow'r which rears its head so high,  
And bids defiance to the sky,  
Invites the hostile winds:  
Yon branching oak extending wide,  
Provokes destruction by its pride,  
And courts the fall it finds.

#### V.

Then let me shun th' ambitious deed,  
And all the dang'rous paths which lead  
To honours falsely won;  
Lord! in thy sure protection blest,  
Submissive will I ever rest,  
And may thy will be done!

[*He lays down his harp and rises.*]

DAVID. Methinks this shepherd's life  
were dull and tasteless

Without the charm of soothing song or  
harp:

With it, not undelightful is the haunt  
Of wood, or lonely grove, or russet  
plain,

Made vocal by the Muse. With this  
lov'd harp,

This daily solace of my cares, I  
sooth'd

The melancholy monarch, when he lay  
Smit by the chill and spirit-quenching  
hand

Of black despair. God of my fathers,  
hear me!

Here I devote my harp, my verse, my-  
self,



To thy best service! gladly to proclaim  
Glory to God on high, on earth good-  
will

To man; to pour my grateful soul be-  
fore thee;

To sing thy pow'r, thy wisdom, and thy  
love,

And ev'ry gracious attribute; to paint  
The charms of heaven-born Virtue!  
So shall I

(Though with long interval of worth)  
aspire

To imitate the work of saints above,  
Of Cherub and of Seraphim. My  
heart,

My talents, all I am, and all I have,  
Is thine, O Father! Gracious Lord,  
accept

The humble dedication! Offer'd gifts  
Of slaughter'd bulls and goats sacrifi-  
cial

Thou hast refus'd: but lo, I come, O  
Lord!

To do thy will; the living sacrifice  
Of an obedient heart I lay before  
thee:

This humble off'ring more shall please  
thee, Lord,

Than horned bullocks, ceremonial  
rites,

New moons, and Sabbaths, passovers,  
and fasts!

Yet those I too will keep; but not in  
lieu

Of holiness substantial, inward worth;  
As commutation cheap for pious  
deeds

And purity of life, but as the types

Of better things; as fair external signs  
Of inward holiness and secret truth.

But see, my father, good old Jesse  
comes!

To cheer the setting evening of whose  
life,

Content, a simple shepherd here I  
dwell,

Though Israel is in arms; and royal  
Saul,

Encamp'd in yonder field, defies Philis-  
tia.

JESSE, DAVID.

JESSE. Blest be the gracious pow'r  
who gave my age

To boast a son like thee! Thou art  
the staff

Which props my bending years, and  
makes me bear

The heavy burden of declining age  
With fond complacency. How unlike  
thy fate,

O venerable Eli! But two sons,  
But only two to gild the dim remains  
Of life's departing day, and bless thy  
age,

And both were curses to thee! Witness,  
Heaven,

In all the cruel catalogue of pains  
Humanity turns o'er, if there be one  
So terrible to human tenderness

As an unnatural child!

DAVID. O! my lov'd father!  
Long may'st thou live, in years and  
honours rich;

To taste and to communicate the joys,  
The thousand fond endearing charities,  
Of tenderness domestic; Nature's best  
And loveliest gift, with which she well  
atones

The niggard boon of fortune.

JESSE. O! my son!  
Of all the graces which adorn thy  
youth,

I, with a father's fondness, must com-  
mend

Thy try'd humility. For though the  
seer

Pour'd on thy chosen head, the sacred  
oil

In sign of future greatness, in sure  
pledge

Of highest dignity, yet here thou  
dwell'st

Content with toil and careless of re-  
pose;

And (harder still for an ingenuous  
mind)

Content to be obscure; content to  
watch

With careful eye, thy humble father's  
flock!

O earthly emblem of celestial things!  
So Israel's shepherd watches o'er his  
fold:

The weak ones in his fost'ring bosom  
bears:

And gently leads in his sustaining hand,  
The feeble ones with young.

DAVID. Know'st thou, my father,  
Aught from the field? for though so  
near the camp,

Though war's proud ensigns stream on  
yonder plain,  
And all Philistia's swarming hosts en-  
camp,  
Oppos'd to royal Saul, beneath whose  
banners  
My brothers lift the spear—I have not  
left  
My fleecy charge, by thee committed to  
me,  
To learn the various fortunes of the  
war.

JESSE. And wisely hast thou done.  
Thrice happy realm,  
Who shall submit one day to his com-  
mand  
Who can so well obey! Obedience  
leads  
To certain honours. Not the tow'ring  
wing  
Of eagle-plum'd ambition mounts so  
surely  
To fortune's highest summit, as obedi-  
ence.

[*A distant sound of trumpets.*]

But why that sudden ardour, O my son?  
That trumpet's sound (though so re-  
mote its voice,  
We hardly catch the echo as it dies)  
Has rous'd the mantling crimson, in thy  
cheek,  
Kindled the martial spirit in thine eye;  
And my young shepherd feels an hero's  
fire!

DAVID. Thou hast not told the posture  
of the war,  
And much my beating bosom pants to  
hear.

JESSE. Uncertain is the fortune of  
the field.

I tremble for thy brothers, thus ex-  
pos'd

To constant peril; nor for them alone  
Does the quick feeling agonize my  
heart.

I feel for all!—I mourn, that ling'ring  
War

Still hangs his banner o'er my native  
land.

Belov'd Jerusalem! O War! what art  
thou?

At once the proof and scourge of man's  
fall'n state!

After the brightest conquest, what ap-  
pears

Of all thy glories? for the vanquish'd,  
chains!

For the proud victor, what? Alas, to  
reign

O'er desolated nations! a drear waste,  
By one man's crime, by one man's lust  
of pow'r,

Unpeopled! Ravag'd fields assume the  
place

Of smiling harvests, and uncultur'd  
plains

Succeed the fertile vineyard; barren  
waste

Deforms the spot once rich with  
luscious fig

And the fat olive.—Devastation reigns.  
Here, rifled temples are the cavern'd  
dens

Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds  
obscene;

There, pop'lous cities blacken in the sun,  
And in the general wreck, proud palaces  
Lie undistinguish'd save by the dun  
smoke

Of recent conflagration. When the song  
Of dear-bought joy, with many a  
triumph swell'd,

Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his  
pride,

How is the grateful harmony profan'd  
With the sad dissonance of virgin's  
cries,

Who mourn their brothers slain! of  
matrons hoar,

Who clasp their wither'd hands, and  
fondly ask,

With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd  
sons!

How is the laurel's verdure stain'd with  
blood,

And soil'd with widows' tears!

DAVID. Thrice mournful truth!  
Yet when our country's sacred rights  
are menac'd;

Her firm foundations shaken to their  
base;

When all we love, and all that we  
revere,

Our hearths and altars, children, par-  
ents, wives,

Our liberties and laws; the throne they  
guard,

Are scorn'd and tramp'd on—then,  
then, my father!

'Tis then Religion's voice; then God  
himself

Commands us to defend his injur'd  
name,

And think the victory cheaply bought  
with life.

'Twere then inglorious weakness, mean  
self-love:

To lie inactive, when the stirring voice  
Of the shrill trumpet wakes the patriot  
youth,

And, with heroic valour, bids them dare  
The foul idolatrous bands, e'en to the  
death.

JESSE. God and thy country claim  
the life they gave;

No other cause can sanctify resentment.

DAVID. Sure virtuous friendship is a  
noble cause!

O were the princely Jonathan in danger,  
How would I die, well pleas'd, in his  
defence;

When, 'twas long since, then but a  
stripling boy

I made short sojourn in his father's  
palace,

(At first to soothe his troubled mind  
with song,

His armour-bearer next) I well re-  
member

The gracious bounties of the gallant  
prince.

How would he sit, attentive to my  
strain,

While to my harp I sung the harmless  
joys

Which crown a shepherd's life! How  
would he cry,

Bless'd youth! far happier in thy native  
worth,

Far richer in the talent Heav'n has lent  
thee,

Than if a crown hung o'er thy anxious  
brow.

The jealous monarch mark'd our grow-  
ing friendship;

And as my favour grew with those  
about him,

His royal bounty lessen'd, till at length,  
For Bethl'hem's safer shades I left the  
court.

Nor would these alter'd features now  
be known,

Grown into manly strength; nor this  
chang'd form,

Enlarg'd with age, and clad in russ  
weed.

JESSE. I have employment for the  
my lov'd son!

Will please thy active spirit. Go,  
boy!

Haste to the field of war, to yond  
camp,

Where in the vale of Elah mighty Sa-  
Commands the hosts of Israel. Gre-  
thy brothers;

Observe their deeds, note their de-  
meanour well,

And mark if on their actions Wisdo-  
waits.

Bear to them too (for well the waste o-  
war

Will make it needful) such plain health-  
ful viands

As furnish out our frugal shepherd  
meal.

And to the valiant captain of their ho-

Present such rural gifts as suit ou-  
fortune:

Heap'd on the board within my ten-  
thou'lt find them.

DAVID. With joy I'll bear thy pres-  
ents to my brothers;

And to the valiant captain of their ho-

The rural gifts thy gratitude assign  
him.

Delightful task!—for I shall view th-

camp!

What transport to behold the tente  
field,

The pointed spear, the blaze of shield  
and arms,

And all the proud accoutrements o-  
war!

But, oh! far dearer transport would  
yield me,

Could this right arm alone avenge th-  
cause

Of injur'd Israel! could my single deat-

Preserve the guiltless thousands doom-  
to bleed!

JESSE. Let not thy youth be dazzle-  
O my son!

With deeds of bold emprise, as valou-  
only

Were virtue, and the gentle arts o-  
peace,

Of truth, and justice, were not wort-  
thy care.

When thou shalt view the splendour  
 of the war,  
 The gay caparison, the burnish'd shield,  
 The plume-crown'd helmet, and the  
 glitt'ring spear,  
 Scorn not the humble virtues of the  
 shade,  
 Nor think that Heav'n views only with  
 applause  
 The active merit and the busy toil  
 Of heroes, statesmen, and the bustling  
 sons  
 Of public care. These have their just  
 reward,  
 In wealth, in honours, and the well-  
 earned fame  
 Their high achievements bring. 'Tis in  
 this view  
 That virtue is her proper recompense:  
 Wealth, as its natural consequence, will  
 flow  
 From industry: toil with success is  
 crown'd:  
 From splendid actions high renown will  
 spring.  
 Such is the usual course of human  
 things;  
 For Wisdom Infinite permits, that thus  
 Effects to causes be proportionate,  
 And nat'ral ends by nat'ral means  
 achiev'd.  
 But in the future estimate which  
 Heaven  
 Will make of things terrestrial, know,  
 my son,  
 That no inferior blessing is reserv'd  
 For the mild passive virtues; meek con-  
 tent,  
 Heroic self-denial, nobler far  
 Than all th' achievements noisy Fame  
 reports,  
 When her shrill trump proclaims the  
 proud success  
 Which desolates the nations. But, on  
 earth,  
 These are not always prosperous—  
 mark the cause:  
 Eternal Justice keeps them for the bliss  
 Of final recompense, for the dread day  
 Of gen'ral retribution. O, my son!  
 The ostentatious virtues which still  
 press  
 For notice and for praise; the brilliant  
 deeds  
 Which live but in the eye of observa-  
 tion,

These have their meed at once. But  
 there's joy  
 To the fond votaries of Fame unknown,  
 To hear the still small voice of Con-  
 science speak  
 Its whispering plaudit to the silent soul.  
 Heaven notes the sigh afflicted Good-  
 ness heaves,  
 Hears the low plaint by human ear un-  
 heard,  
 And from the cheek of patient Sorrow  
 wipes  
 The tear, by mortal eye unseen or  
 scorn'd.

DAVID. As Hermon's dews their  
 grateful freshness shed,  
 And cheer the herbage, and the flow'rs  
 renew,  
 So do thy words a quickening balm  
 infuse,  
 And grateful sink in my delighted soul.  
 JESSE. Go, then, my child; and may  
 the gracious God  
 Who bless'd our fathers, bless my much  
 lov'd son!

DAVID. Farewell, my father!—and of  
 this be sure,  
 That not one precept from thy honour'd  
 lips  
 Shall fall by me unnotic'd; not one  
 grace,  
 One venerable virtue which adorns  
 Thy daily life, but I, with watchful care  
 And due observance, will in mine trans-  
 plant it. [Exit David.]

JESSE. He's gone! and still my aching  
 eyes pursue  
 And strain their orbs still longer to  
 behold him.  
 Oh! who can tell when next I may  
 embrace him?  
 Who can declare the counsels of the  
 Lord?  
 Or when the moment pre-ordain'd by  
 Heav'n  
 To fill his great designs, may come?  
 This son,  
 This blessing of my age, is set apart  
 For high exploits; the chosen instru-  
 ment  
 Of all-disposing Heav'n for mighty  
 deeds.  
 Still I recall the day, and to my mind  
 The scene is ever present, when the  
 seer,

Illustrious Samuel, to the humble  
 shades  
 Of Bethlehem came, pretending sacri-  
 fice,  
 To screen his errand from the jealous  
 king  
 He sanctify'd us first, me and my sons;  
 For sanctity increas'd should still pre-  
 cede  
 Increase of dignity. When he declar'd  
 He came commission'd from on high to  
 find,  
 Among the sons of Jesse, Israel's king,  
 Astonishment entranc'd my wond'ring  
 soul!  
 Yet was it not a wild, tumultuous bliss;  
 Such rash delight as promis'd honours  
 yield  
 To light vain minds: no, 'twas a doubt-  
 ful joy,  
 Chastis'd by tim'rous Virtue, lest a gift  
 So splendid and so dang'rous might  
 destroy  
 Him it was meant to raise. My eldest  
 born,  
 Eliab, tall of stature, I presented;  
 But God, who judges not by outward  
 form,  
 But tries the heart, forbade the holy  
 prophet  
 To choose my eldest born. For Saul,  
 he said,  
 Gave proof, that fair proportion, and  
 the grace  
 Of limb and feature, ill repaid the want  
 Of virtue. All my other sons alike  
 By Samuel were rejected; till, at last,  
 On my young boy, on David's chosen  
 head,  
 The prophet pour'd the consecrated oil.  
 Yet ne'er did pride elate him, ne'er did  
 scorn  
 For his rejected elders swell his heart.  
 Not in such gentle charity to him  
 His haughtier brothers live: but all he  
 pardons.  
 To meditation, and to humble toil,  
 To pray'r, and praise devoted, here he  
 dwells.  
 O may the Graces which adorn retreat  
 One day delight a court! record his  
 name  
 With saints and prophets, dignify his  
 race,  
 And may the sacred songs his leisure  
 frames

Instruct mankind, and sanctify a world!

## PART II.

### Scene—The Camp.

ELIAB, ABINADAB, ABNER, ISRAELITES.

ELIAB. Still is the event of this long  
 war uncertain:  
 Still do the adverse hosts, on either  
 side,  
 Protract, with ling'ring caution, an  
 encounter,  
 Which must to one be fatal.  
 ABINADAB. This descent,  
 Thus to the very confines of our land,  
 Proclaims the sanguine hope that fires  
 the foe.  
 In Ephes-dammim boldly they encamp;  
 Th' uncircumcis'd Philistines pitch their  
 tents  
 On Judah's hallow'd earth.  
 ELIAB. Full forty days  
 Has the insulting giant, proud Goliath,  
 The champion of Philistia, fiercely  
 challeng'd  
 Some Israelitish foe. But who so vain  
 To dare such force unequal? who so  
 bent  
 On sure destruction, to accept his terms,  
 And rush on death, beneath the giant's  
 force  
 Of his enormous bulk?  
 ABINADAB. 'Tis near the time  
 When in the adjacent valley which  
 divides  
 Th' opposing armies he is wont to make  
 His daily challenge.  
 ELIAB. Much I marvel, brother,  
 No greetings from our father reach our  
 ears.  
 With ease and plenty bless'd, he little  
 recks  
 The daily hardships which his sons  
 endure.  
 But see! behold his darling boy ap-  
 proaches!  
 ABIN. How, David here! whence this  
 unlook'd-for guest?  
 ELIAB. A spy upon our actions; sent,  
 no doubt,  
 To scan our deeds, with beardless  
 gravity  
 Affecting wisdom; to observe each  
 word,  
 To magnify the venial faults of youth,



And construe harmless mirth, to foul offence.

*Enter DAVID.*

DAVID. All hail, my dearest brothers!

ELIAB. Means thy greeting True love, or arrogant scorn?

DAVID. O, most true love! Sweet as the precious ointment which bedew'd The sacred head of Aaron, and descended

Upon his hallow'd vest, so sweet, my brothers, Is fond fraternal amity; such love As my touch'd bosom feels at your approach.

ELIAB. Still that fine glozing speech, those holy saws, And all that trick of studied sanctity, Of smooth-turn'd periods and trim eloquence,

Which charms thy doating father! But confess, What dost thou here? Is it to soothe thy pride,

And gratify thy vain desire to roam In quest of pleasures unallow'd? or com'st thou

A willing spy to note thy brothers' deeds?

Where hast thou left those few poor stragglers?

More suited to thy ignorance and years The care of those, than here to wander idly:

Why cam'st thou hither?

DAVID. Is there not a cause? Why that displeasure kindling in thine eye

My angry brother? why those taunts unkind?

Not idly bent on sport; not to delight Mine eye with all this gay parade of war;

To gratify a roving appetite, Or fondly to indulge a curious ear With any tale of rumour, am I come; But to approve myself a loving brother. I bring the blessing of your aged sire, With gifts of such plain cates and rural viands

As suit his frugal fortune. Tell me now,

Where the bold captain of your host encamps?

ELIAB. Wherefore inquire? what boots it thee to know? Behold him there: great Abner, fam'd in arms.

DAVID. I bring thee, mighty Abner, from my father, (A simple shepherd swain in yonder vale)

Such humble gifts as shepherd swains bestow.

ABNER. Thanks, gentle youth! with pleasure I receive The grateful off'ring. Why does thy quick eye Thus wander with unsatisf'd delight?

DAVID. New as I am to all the trade of war Each sound has novelty; each thing I see

Attracts attention; every noise I hear Awakes confus'd emotions; indistinct, Yet full of charming tumult, sweet distraction.

'Tis all delightful hurry! Oh! the joy Of young ideas painted on the mind, In the warm, glowing colours fancy spreads

On objects not yet known, when all is new,

And all is lovely! Ah! what warlike sound

Salutes my ravish'd ear?

[*Sound of trumpets.*]

ABNER. 'Tis the Philistine Proclaiming, by his herald, through the ranks,

His near approach. Each morning he repeats

His challenge to our bands.

DAVID. Ha! what Philistine? Who is he?

ELIAB. Wherefore ask? for thy raw youth

And rustic ignorance, 'twere fitter learn Some rural art! some secret to prevent Contagion in thy flocks; some better means

To save their fleece immaculate. These mean arts

Of soft inglorious peace far better suit  
Thy low obscurity, than thus to seek  
High things pertaining to exploits of  
arms.

DAVID. Urg'd as I am, I will not  
answer thee.  
Who conquers his own spirit, O my  
brother!  
He is the only conqueror.—Again  
That shout mysterious! Pray you (*to  
Abner*) tell me who  
This proud Philistine is, who sends de-  
fiance  
To Israel's hardy chieftains?

ABNER. Stranger youth,  
So lovely and so mild is thy demeanor,  
So gentle and so patient; such the air  
Of candour and of courage which  
adorns  
Thy blooming features, thou hast won  
my love:  
And I will tell thee.

DAVID. Mighty Abner, thanks!

ABNER. Thrice, and no more, he  
sounds, his daily rule!  
This man of war, this champion of  
Philistia,  
Is of the sons of Anak's giant-race:  
Goliath is his name. His fearful  
stature,  
Unparallel'd in Israel, measures more  
Than twice three cubits. On his  
tow'ring head  
A helm of burnish'd brass the giant  
wears,  
So pond'rous, it would crush the stout-  
est man  
In all our hosts. A coat of mail'd  
armour  
Guards his capacious trunk! compar'd  
with which,  
The amplest oak that spreads his rugged  
arms  
In Bashan's groves, were small. About  
his neck  
A shining corslet hangs. On his vast  
thigh  
The plaited cuirass, firmly jointed,  
stands.  
But who shall tell the wonders of his  
spear,  
And hope to gain belief! Of massive  
iron

Its temper'd frame, not less than the  
broad beam  
To which the busy weaver hangs his  
loom:

Not to be wielded by a mortal hand,  
Save by his own. An armour bearer  
walks

Before this mighty champion, in his  
hand

Bearing the giant's shield. Thrice ev'ry  
morn

His herald sounds the trumpet of de-  
fiance!

Off'ring at once to end the long-drawn  
war

In single combat 'gainst that hardy foe  
Who dares encounter him.

DAVID. Say, mighty Abner,  
What are the haughty terms of his de-  
fiance?

ABNER. Proudly he stalks around th'  
extremest bounds

Of Elah's vale. His herald sounds the  
note

Of offer'd battle. Then the furious  
giant,

With such a voice as from the troubled  
sky

In volliéd thunder breaks, thus sends  
his challenge:

"Why do you set your battle in array,  
Ye men of Israel? Wherefore waste  
the lives

Of needless thousands? Why protract  
a war

Which may at once be ended? Are not  
you

Servants to Saul your king? and am  
not I,

With triumph let me speak it, a Philis-  
tine?

Choose out a man from all your armèd  
hosts,

Of courage most approv'd, and I will  
meet him;

His single arm to mine. Th' event of  
this

Shall fix the fate of Israel and Philistia.  
If victory favour him, then will we live

Your tributary slaves; but if my arm  
Be crown'd with conquest, you shall

then live ours.

Give me a man, if your effeminate  
bands

A man can boast. Your armies I defy!"

DAVID. What shall be done to him  
who shall subdue  
This vile idolater?

ABNER. He shall receive  
Such ample bounties, such profuse re-  
wards,

As might inflame the old, or warm the  
coward,

Were not the odds so desperate.

DAVID. Say, what are they?

ABNER. The royal Saul has promis'd  
that bold hero

Who should encounter and subdue Go-  
liath,

All dignity and favour; that his house  
Shall be set free from tribute, and en-  
nobled

With the first honours Israel has to  
give.

As for the gallant conqueror himself,  
No less a recompense than the fair  
princess,

Our monarch's peerless daughter.

DAVID. Beauteous Michal!  
It is indeed a boon which kings might  
strive for.

And has none answer'd yet this bold  
defiance?

What! all this goodly host of Israelites!  
God's own peculiar people! all afraid,  
T' assert God's injur'd honour and their  
own?

Where is the king, who in his early  
youth

Wrought deeds of fame! Where  
princely Jonathan?

Not so the gallant youth Philistia fear'd  
At Bozez and at Seneh;\* when the  
earth

Shook from her deep foundations to  
behold

The wond'rous carnage of his single  
hand

On the uncircumcis'd. When he ex-  
claim'd,

With glorious confidence—'Shall num-  
bers awe me?

God will protect his own: with him to  
save

It boots not, friends, by many or by  
few.'

This was an hero! Why does he delay  
To meet this boaster? For thy cour-  
tesy,

Thrice noble Abner, I am bound to  
thank thee.

Wouldst thou complete thy gen'rous  
offices?

I dare not ask it.

ABNER. Speak thy wishes freely:  
My soul inclines to serve thee.

DAVID. Then, O Abner,  
Conduct me to the king! There is a  
cause

Will justify this boldness!

ELIAB. Braggart, hold!

ABNER. I take thee at thy word; and  
will, with speed,

Conduct thee to my royal master's  
presence.

In yonder tent the anxious monarch  
waits

Th' event of this day's challenge.

DAVID. Noble Abner,  
Accept my thanks. Now to thy private  
ear,

If so thy grace permit I will unfold  
My secret soul, and ease my lab'ring  
breast,

Which pants with high designs, and  
beats for glory.

### PART III.

#### Scene—Saul's Tent.

SAUL. Why was I made a king?  
what I have gain'd

In envy'd greatness and uneasy pow'r,  
I've lost in peace of mind, in virtue  
lost!

Why did deceitful transports fire my  
soul

When Samuel plac'd upon my youthful  
brow

The crown of Israel? I had known  
content,

Nay happiness, if happiness unmix'd  
To mortal man were known, had I still  
liv'd

\*I. Samuel xiv:4.

Among the humble tents of Benjamin.  
 A shepherd's occupation was my joy,  
 And every guiltless day was crown'd  
     with peace,  
 But now, a sullen cloud forever hangs  
 O'er the faint sunshine of my brightest  
     hours,  
 Dark'ning the golden promise of the  
     morn.  
 I ne'er shall taste the dear domestic  
     joys  
 My meanest subjects know. True, I  
     have sons,  
 Whose virtues would have charm'd a  
     private man,  
 And drawn down blessings on their  
     humble sire.  
 I love their virtues too; but 'tis a love  
 Which jealousy has poison'd. Jonathan  
 Is all a father's fondness could conceive  
 Of amiable and good—Of that no more!  
 He is too popular; the people doat  
 Upon th' ingenuous graces of his youth.  
 Curs'd popularity! which makes a  
     father  
 Detest the merit of a son he loves,  
 How did their fond idolatry, perforce.  
 Rescue his sentenc'd life, when doom'd  
     by lot  
 To perish at Beth-aven,\* for the breach  
 Of strict injunction, that of all my  
     bands,  
 Not one that day should taste of food  
     and live!  
 My subjects clamour at this tedious  
     war,  
 Yet of my num'rous arm'd chiefs not  
     one  
 Has courage to engage this man of  
     Gath.  
 O for a champion bold enough to face  
 This giant-boaster, whose repeated  
     threats  
 Strike through my inmost soul! There  
     was a time—  
 Of that no more! I am not what I was.  
 Should valiant Jonathan accept the  
     challenge,  
 'Twould but increase his influence, raise  
     his fame,  
 And make the crown sit lightly on my  
     brow.

\* *I Samuel xiv, 23.*

Ill could my wounded spirit brook the  
     voice  
 Of harsh comparison 'twixt sire and  
     son.

SAUL, ABNER.

ABNER. What meditation holds thee  
     thus engag'd,  
 O king! and keeps thine active spirit  
     bound;  
 When busy war for other cares de-  
     mands  
 That ruminating thought and pale de-  
     spair?

SAUL. Abner, draw near. My weary  
     soul sinks down  
 Beneath the heavy pressure of misfor-  
     tune.  
 O for that spirit which inflam'd my  
     breast  
 With sudden fervour, when, among the  
     seers  
 And holy sages my prophetic voice  
 Was heard attentive, and th' astonish'd  
     throng,  
 Wond'ring, exclaim'd,—'Is Saul among  
     the prophets?'  
 Where's that bold arm which quell'd  
     the Amalekite,  
 And nobly spar'd fierce Agag and his  
     flocks?  
 'Tis past! the light of Israel now is  
     quench'd:  
 Shorn of his beams, my sun of glory  
     sets!  
 Rise Moab, Edom, angry Ammon rise!  
 Come Gaza, Ashdod come! let Ekron  
     boast,  
 And Askelon rejoice, for Saul is—  
     nothing.

ABNER. I bring thee news, O king!

SAUL. My valiant uncle,  
 What can avail thy news? A soul  
     oppress'd  
 Refuses still to hear the charmer's  
     voice,  
 Howe'er enticingly he charm. What  
     news  
 Can soothe my sickly soul, while Gath's  
     fell giant  
 Repeats each morning to my frighten'd  
     hosts

His daring challenge, none accepting it?

ABNER. It is accepted.

SAUL. Ha! By whom? how? when?  
What prince, what gen'ral, what illustrious hero,  
What vet'ran chief, what warrior of renown,  
Will dare to meet the haughty foe's defiance?  
Speak, my brave gen'ral! noble Abner, speak!

ABNER. No prince, no warrior, no illustrious chief,  
No vet'ran hero dares accept the challenge;  
But what will move thy wonder, mighty king,  
One train'd to peaceful deeds, and new to arms,  
A simple shepherd swain!

SAUL. O mockery!  
No more of this light tale, it suits but ill  
Thy bearded gravity: or rather tell it  
To credulous age, or weak believing women;  
They love whate'er is marvellous, and doat  
On deeds prodigious and incredible,  
Which sober sense rejects. I laugh to think  
Of thy extravagance. A shepherd's boy  
Encounter him whom nations dread to meet!

ABNER. Is valour then peculiar to high birth?  
If Heav'n had so decreed, know, scornful king,  
That Saul the Benjamite had never reign'd.  
No!—Glory darts her soul-pervading ray  
On thrones and cottages, regardless still  
Of all the artificial, nice distinctions  
Vain human customs make.

SAUL. Where is this youth?

ABNER. Without thy tent he waits.  
Such humble sweetness,  
Fir'd with the secret conscience of desert;

Such manly bearing, temper'd with such softness,  
And so adorn'd with ev'ry outward charm  
Of graceful form and feature, saw I never.

SAUL. Bring me the youth.

ABNER. He waits thy royal pleasure.  
[Exit Abner.]

SAUL. What must I think? Abner himself is brave,  
And skill'd in human kind: nor does he judge  
So lightly, to be caught by specious words  
And Fraud's smooth artifice, were there not marks  
Of worth intrinsic. But behold he comes!  
The youth too with him! Justly did he praise  
The candour which adorns his open brow.

*Re-enter ABNER and DAVID.*

DAVID. Hail mighty king!

ABNER. Behold thy proffer'd champion!

SAUL. Art thou the youth whose high heroic zeal  
Aspires to meet the giant son of Anak?

DAVID. If so the king permit.

SAUL. Impossible!  
Why, what experience has thy youth of arms?

Where, stripling, didst thou learn the trade of war?

Beneath what hoary vet'ran hast thou serv'd?

What feats hast thou achieved, what daring deeds?

What well-rang'd phalanx, say, what charging hosts,

What hard campaigns, what sieges hast thou seen?

Hast thou e'er scal'd the city's rampir'd wall

Or hurl'd the missile dart, or learn'd to poise



The warrior's deathful spear? The use  
of targe,  
Of helm, and buckler, is to thee un-  
known.

DAVID. Arms I have seldom seen. I  
little know  
Of war's proud discipline. The trum-  
pet's clang,  
The shock of charging hosts, the ram-  
pir'd wall,  
Th' embattled phalanx, and the war-  
rior's spear,  
The use of targe and helm to me is  
new.  
My zeal for God, my patriot love of  
Israel,  
My reverence for my king, behold my  
claims!

SAUL. But gentle youth! thou hast  
no fame in arms,  
Renown, with her shrill clarion, never  
bore  
Thy honour'd name to many a land  
remote;  
From the fair regions where Euphrates  
laves  
Assyria's borders to the distant Nile.

DAVID. True, mighty king! I am in-  
deed alike  
Unbless'd by Fortune and to Fame un-  
known;  
A lowly shepherd-swain of Judah's  
tribe:  
But greatness ever springs from low  
beginnings.  
That very Nile thou mention'st, whose  
broad stream  
Bears fruitfulness and health through  
many a clime,  
From an unknown, penurious, scanty  
source  
Took its first rise. The forest oak,  
which shades  
The sultry troops in many a toilsome  
march  
Once an unheeded acorn lay. O king!  
Who ne'er begins can never aught  
achieve.  
Of glorious. Thou thyself wast once  
unknown,  
Till fair occasion brought thy worth  
to light.

Far higher views inspire my youthful  
heart  
Than human praise: I seek to vindicate  
Th' insulted honour of the God I serve.

ABNER. 'Tis nobly said.

SAUL. I love thy spirit, youth!  
But dare not trust thy inexperience'd  
arm  
Against a giant's might. The sight of  
blood,  
Though brave thou feel'st when peril is  
not nigh,  
Will pale thy ardent cheek.

DAVID. Not so, O king!  
This youthful arm has been imbru'd in  
blood,  
Though yet no blood of man has ever  
stain'd it.  
Thy servant's occupation is a shepherd.  
With jealous care I watch'd my father's  
flock:  
A brindled lion and a furious bear  
Forth from the thicket rush'd upon the  
fold,  
Seiz'd a young lamb, and tore their  
bleating spoil.  
Urg'd by compassion for my helpless  
charge,  
I felt a new-born vigour nerve my arm;  
And, eager, on the foaming monsters  
rush'd  
The famish'd lion by his grisly beard,  
Enrag'd, I caught, and smote him to  
the ground.  
The panting monster struggling in my  
gripe,  
Shook terribly his bristling mane, and  
lash'd  
His own gaunt, gory sides; fiercely he  
ground  
His gnashing teeth, and rolled his start-  
ing eyes,  
Bloodshot with agony; then with a  
groan,  
That wak'd the echoes of the moun-  
tain, died.  
Nor did his grim associate 'scape my  
arm;  
Thy servant slew the lion and the bear;  
I kill'd them both, and bore their shaggy  
spoils  
In triumph home: and shall I fear to  
meet

Th' uncircumcis'd Philistine? No: that  
 God  
 Who sav'd me from the bear's de-  
 structive fang  
 And hungry lion's jaw, will not he save  
 me  
 From this idolater?

SAUL. He will, he will!  
 Go, noble youth! be valiant and be  
 bless'd!

The God thou serv'st will shield thee  
 in the fight,  
 And nerve thy arm with more than  
 mortal strength.

ABNER. So the bold Nazarite\* a lion  
 slew:  
 An earnest of his victories o'er Phil-  
 istia!

SAUL. Go, Abner; see the youth be  
 well equipp'd  
 With shield and spear. Be it thy care  
 to grace him  
 With all the fit accoutrements of war.  
 The choicest mail from my rich ar-  
 mory take,  
 And gird upon his thigh my own try'd  
 sword  
 Of noblest temper'd steel.

ABNER. I shall obey.

DAVID. Pardon, O king! the coat of  
 plaited mail  
 These limbs have never known; it  
 would not shield,  
 'Twould but encumber one who never  
 felt  
 The weight of armour.

SAUL. Take thy wish, my son!  
 Thy sword then, and the God of Jacob  
 guard thee!

#### PART IV.

*Scene—Another part of the camp.*

DAVID (kneeling).

Eternal justice! in whose awful scale  
 Th' event of battle hangs! Eternal  
 Truth!

Whose beams illumine all! Eternal  
 Mercy!

If, by all thy attributes I may, un-  
 blam'd,

Address thee; Lord of glory! hear me  
 now:

O teach these hands to war, these arms  
 to fight.

Thou ever present help in time of need!  
 Let thy broad mercy, as a shield, de-  
 fend,

And let thine everlasting arms support  
 me!

Strong in thy strength, in thy protec-  
 tion safe

Then, though the heathen rage, I shall  
 not fear.

Jehovah, be my buckler! Mighty Lord!  
 Thou who hast deign'd by humble in-  
 struments

To manifest the wonders of thy might,  
 Be present with me now! 'Tis thine  
 own cause!

Thy wisdom sees events, thy goodness  
 plans

Schemes baffling our conception—and,  
 'tis still

Omnipotence which executes the deed  
 Of high design, though by a feeble  
 arm!

I feel a secret impulse drive me on;  
 And my soul springs impatient for the  
 fight!

'Tis not the heated spirits, or warm  
 blood

Of sanguine youth with which my  
 bosom burns!

And, though I thirst to meet th' insult-  
 ing foe,

And pant for glory, 'tis not, witness  
 Heav'n!

'Tis not the sinful lust of fading fame,  
 The perishable praise of mortal man;  
 His praise I covet, whose applause is  
 Life.

DAVID, ELIAB, ISRAELITES.

ELIAB. What do I hear? thou truant!  
 thou hast dared

E'en to the awful presence of the king  
 Bear thy presumption!

DAVID. He who fears the Lord  
 Shall boldly stand before the face of  
 kings,

And shall not be asham'd.

\*Samson. See Judges, chap. xiv.

ELIAB. But what wild dream  
Has urg'd thee to this deed of desp'rate  
rashness?

Thou mean'st, so I have learn't, to meet  
Goliath,  
His single arm to thine.

DAVID. 'Tis what I purpose,  
Ev'n on this spot. Each moment I  
expect  
His wish'd approach.

ELIAB. Go home; return, for shame!  
Nor madly draw destruction on thy  
head.

Thy doating father, when thy shep-  
herd's coat,  
Drench'd in thy blood, is brought him,  
will lament,

And rend his furrow'd cheek and silver  
hair,

As if some mighty loss had touch'd  
his age;

And mourn, ev'n as the partial patriarch  
mourn'd

When Joseph's bloody garment he re-  
ceiv'd

From his less dear, nor less deserving  
sons:

But whence that glitt'ring ornament  
which hangs

Useless upon thy thigh?

DAVID. 'Tis the king's gift.  
But thou art right; it suits not me, my  
brother!

Nor sword I mean to use, nor spear to  
poise,

Lest men should say I put my trust in  
arms,

Not in the Lord of Hosts.

ELIAB. Then thou indeed  
Art bent to seek thy death?

DAVID. And what is death?  
Is it so terrible to die, my brother?  
Or grant it terrible, is it for that  
The less inevitable? If, indeed  
We could by stratagem elude the blow,  
When some high duty calls us forth to  
die,

And thus for ever shun it, and escape  
The universal lot,—then fond self-love,  
Then cautious Prudence, boldly might  
produce

Their fine-spun arguments, their learn'd  
harangues,

Their cobweb arts, their phrase sophis-  
tical,

Their subtle doubts, and all the specious  
trick

Of selfish cunning lab'ring for its end.  
But since, howe'er protracted, death  
will come,

Why fondly study, with ingenious pains,  
To put it off! To breathe a little longer

Is to defer our fate, but not to shun it.  
Small gain! which Wisdom with indif-  
f'rent eye

Beholds. Why wish to drink the bitter  
dregs

Of life's exhausted chalice, whose last  
runnings,

Ev'n at the best, are vapid! Why not  
die

(If Heav'n so will) in manhood's op'n-  
ing bloom,

When all the flush of life is gay  
about us!

When sprightly youth with many a new-  
born joy,

Solicits every sense! So may we then  
Present a sacrifice, unmeet indeed,

(Ah, how unmeet!) but less unworthy  
far,

Than the world's leavings; than a worn  
out heart,

By vice enfeebled, and by vain desires  
Sunk and exhausted!

ELIAB. Hark! I hear a sound  
Of multitudes approaching!

DAVID. 'Tis the giant!  
I see him not, but hear his measur'd  
pace.

ELIAB. Look, where his pond'rous  
shield is borne before him!

DAVID. Like a broad moon its ample  
disk portends.

But soft!—what unknown prodigy ap-  
pears?

A moving mountain cas'd in polish'd  
brass!

ELIAB (*getting behind David*). How's  
this?

Thou dost not tremble. Thy firm joints  
Betray no fear; thy accents are not  
broken;

Thy cheek retains its red; thine eye its lustre,  
He comes more near! Dost thou not fear him now?

DAVID. No,  
The vast colossal statute nor inspires  
Respect nor fear. Mere magnitude of form,  
Without proportion'd intellect and valour,  
Strikes not my soul with rev'rence or with awe.

ELIAB. Near, and more near he comes! I hold it rash  
To stay so near him, and expose a life  
Which may hereafter serve the state.  
Farewell. [Exit.]

[GOLIATH advances, clad in complete armour. One bearing his shield precedes him. The opposing armies are seen at a distance, drawn up on each side of the valley. GOLIATH begins to speak before he comes on. DAVID stands in the same place, with an air of indifference.]

GOLIATH. Where is this mighty man of war who dares  
Accept the challenge of Philistia's chief?  
What victor king, what gen'ral drench'd in blood,  
Claims this high privilege? What are his rights?  
What proud credentials does the boaster bring  
To prove his claim? What cities laid in ashes?  
What ruin'd provinces? What slaughter'd realms?  
What heads of heroes, and what hearts of kings,  
In battle kill'd, or at his altars slain.  
Has he to boast? Is his bright armory  
Thick set with spears, and swords, and coats of mail  
Of vanquish'd nations, by his single arm  
Subdu'd? Where is the mortal man so bold,  
So much a wretch, so out of love with life,  
To dare the weight of this uplifted spear,

Which never fell innoxious? Yet I swear,  
I grudge the glory to this parting soul  
To fall by this right hand. 'Twill sweeten death,  
To know he had the honour to contend  
With the dread son of Anak. Latest time  
From blank oblivion shall retrieve his name  
Who dar'd to perish in unequal fight  
With Gath's triumphant champion.  
Come, advance.  
Philistia's gods to Israel's. Sound, my herald—  
Sound for the battle straight.

[Herald sounds the trumpet.]

DAVID. Behold thy foe!

GOLIATH. I see him not.

DAVID. Behold him here!

GOLIATH. Say, where!  
Direct my sight. I do not war with boys.

DAVID. I stand prepar'd: thy single arm to mine.

GOLIATH. Why this is mockery, minion! it may chance  
To cost thee dear. Sport not with things above thee!  
But tell me who of all this numerous host  
Expects his death from me? Which is the man  
Whom Israel sends to meet my bold defiance?

DAVID. Th' election of my sov'reign falls on me.

GOLIATH. On thee! on thee! By Dagon, 'tis too much!  
Thou curled minion! thou a nation's champion!  
'Twould move my mirth at any other time;  
But trifling's out of tune, begone, light boy!

And tempt me not too far.

DAVID. I do defy thee,  
Thou foul idolator! Hast thou not scorn'd

The armies of the living God I serve?  
By me he will avenge upon thy head  
Thy nation's sins and thine. Arm'd  
with his name,  
Unshrinking, I dare meet the stoutest  
foe  
That ever bath'd his hostile spear in  
blood.

GOLIATH (*ironically*). Indeed! 'tis  
wond'rous well,  
Now, by my gods,  
The stripling plays the orator! Vain  
boy!  
Keep close to that same bloodless war  
of words,  
And thou shalt still be safe. Tongue-  
valiant warrior!  
Where is thy sylvan crook, with gar-  
lands hung,  
Of idle field flowers? where thy wanton  
harp,  
Thou dainty finger'd hero? better strike  
Its notes lascivious, or the lulling lute  
Touch softly, than provoke the trum-  
pet's rage.  
I will not stain the honour of my spear  
With thy inglorious blood. Shall that  
fair cheek  
Be scarr'd with wounds unseemly?  
Rather go  
And hold fond dalliance with the Syri-  
an maids;  
To wanton measures dance, and let  
them braid  
The bright luxuriance of thy golden  
hair;  
They, for their lost Adonis, may mis-  
take  
Thy dainty form.

DAVID. Peace, thou unhallow'd railer!  
O tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound  
Reach Askelon, how once your slaugh-  
ter'd lords  
By mighty Samson\* found one com-  
mon grave:  
When his broad shoulder the firm pil-  
lars heav'd,  
And to its base the tott'ring fabric  
shook.

GOLIATH. Insulting boy! perhaps thou  
hast not heard

The infamy of that inglorious day,  
When your weak host at Eben-ezer†  
pitch'd  
Their quick-abandon'd tent? Then when  
your ark,  
Your talisman, your charm, your  
boasted pledge  
Of safety and success, was tamely lost!  
And yet not tamely, since by me 'twas  
won.  
When with this good right arm I  
thinn'd your ranks,  
And bravely crush'd, beneath a single  
blow  
The chosen guardians of this vaunted  
shrine,  
Hophni and Phineas. The fam'd ark  
itself  
I bore to Ashdod.

DAVID. I remember too,  
Since thou provok'st th' unwelcome  
truth, how all  
Your blushing priests beheld their idol's  
shame;  
When prostrate Dagon fell before the  
ark,  
And your frail god was shiver'd. Then  
Philistia,  
Idolatrous Philistia, flew for succor  
To Israel's help, and all her smitten  
nobles  
Confess'd the Lord was God; and the  
bless'd ark,  
Gladly, with reverential awe restor'd.

GOLIATH. By Ashdod's fane thou ly'st.  
Now will I meet thee,  
Thou insect warrior, since thou dar'st  
me thus!  
Already I behold thy mangled limbs,  
Dissever'd each from each, ere long to  
feed  
The fierce blood-snuffing vulture. Mark  
me well.  
Around my spear I'll twist thy shining  
locks,  
And toss in air thy head all gash'd with  
wounds,

†Samuel, v.

‡Commentators say, that Chaldee  
paraphrase makes Goliath boast that he  
had killed Hophni and Phineas, and  
taken the ark prisoner.

\*Judges, xvi.



Thy lip yet quiv'ring with the dire convulsion  
Of recent death!—Art thou not terrified?

DAVID. No:

True courage is not mov'd by breath of words:

While the rash bravery of boiling blood,  
Impetuous, knows no settled principle.  
A fev'rish tide, it has its ebbs and flows,  
As spirits raise or fall, as wine inflames,  
Or circumstances change: but inborn  
Courage,

The gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith,

Holds its firm empire in the constant soul;

And like the steadfast pole-star, never once

From the same fix'd and faithful point declines.

GOLIATH. The curses of Philistia's gods be on thee!

This fine-drawn speech is meant to lengthen out

That little life thy words pretend to scorn.

DAVID. Ha! say'st thou so? Come on then. Mark us well.

Thou com'st to me with sword, and spear, and shield;

In the dread name of Israel's God I come;

The living Lord of Hosts, whom thou defy'st!

Yet though no shield I bring, no arms except

These five smooth stones I gather'd from the brook,

With such a simple sling as shepherds use—

Yet all expos'd defenceless as I am,  
The God I serve shall give thee up a prey

To my victorious arm. This day I mean

To make the uncircumcisèd tribes confess

There is a God in Israel. I will give thee,

Spite of thy vaunted strength and giant bulk,

To glut the carrion kites. Nor thee alone;

The mangled carcasses of your thick hosts

Shall spread the plains of Elah, till Philistia,

Through all her trembling tents and flying bands,

Shall own that Judah's God is God indeed!

—I dare thee to the trial.

GOLIATH.

Follow me—

In this good spear I trust.

DAVID.

I trust in Heav'n!

The God of battle stimulates my arm,  
And fires my soul with ardour not its own.

## PART V.

### *Scene—The tent of Saul.*

SAUL (*rising from his couch*). Oh! that I knew the black and midnight arts

Of wizard sorcery! that I could call  
The slumb'ring spirit from the shades of hell!

Or, like the Chaldean sages, could fore-know

Th' event of things unacted! I might then

Anticipate my fortune. How I'm fallen!  
The sport of vain chimeras, the weak slave

Of fear and fancy; coveting to know  
The arts obscene, which foul diviners use.

Thick blood and moping Melancholy lead

To baleful Superstition—that fell fiend,  
Whose with'ring charms blast the fair bloom of Virtue.

Why did my wounded pride with scorn reject

The wholesome truths which holy Samuel told me?

Why drive him from my presence? he might now

Raise my sunk soul, and my benighted mind

Enlighten'd with religion's cheering ray.

He dar'd to menace me with loss of empire;

And I, for that bold honesty, dismiss'd him.

'Another shall possess thy throne,' he cry'd:  
 'A stranger!' This unwelcome prophecy  
 Has lined my crown and strew'd my couch with thorns.  
 Each ray of op'ning merit I discern  
 In friend or foe, distracts my troubled soul,  
 Lest he should prove my rival. But this morn,  
 Ev'n my young champion lovely as he look'd  
 In blooming valour, struck me to the soul  
 With Jealousy's barb'd dart. O Jealousy!  
 Thou ugliest fiend of hell! thy deadly venom  
 Preys on my vitals, turns the healthful hue  
 Of my fresh cheek to haggard sallowness,  
 And drinks my spirit up.

[*A flourish of trumpets, shouting, etc.*]

What sounds are those?  
 The combat is decided. Hark! again  
 Those shouts proclaim it! Now, O God of Jacob,  
 If yet thou hast not quite withdrawn from Saul  
 Thy light and favour, prosper me this once!  
 But Abner comes! I dread to hear his tale!  
 Fair hope, with smiling face but ling'ring foot,  
 Has long deceived.

ABNER. King of Israel, hail!  
 Now thou art king indeed. The youth has conquer'd:  
 Goliath's dead.

SAUL. Oh speak thy tale again,  
 Lest my fond ears deceive me!

ABNER. Thy young champion  
 Has slain the giant.

SAUL. Then God is gracious still,  
 In spite of my offences! But good Abner!  
 How was it? Tell me all. Where is my champion?

Quick let me press him to my grateful heart,  
 And pay him a king's thanks. And yet, who knows,  
 This forward friend may prove an active foe!  
 No more of that. Tell me the whole, brave Abner!  
 And paint the glorious acts of my young hero!

ABNER. Full in the centre of the camp he stood!  
 Th' opposing armies rang'd on either side  
 In proud array. The haughty giant stalk'd  
 Stately across the valley. Next the youth  
 With modest confidence advanc'd. Nor pomp,  
 Nor gay parade, nor martial ornament,  
 His graceful form adorn'd. Goliath strait,  
 With solemn state began the busy work  
 Of dreadful preparation. In one place  
 His closely jointed mail an op'ning left  
 For air, and only one: the watchful youth  
 Mark'd that the beaver of his helm was up.  
 Meanwhile the giant such a blow devis'd  
 As would have crush'd him. This the youth perceiv'd,  
 And from his well-directed sling quick hurl'd,  
 With dex'trous aim a stone, which sunk, deep lodg'd,  
 In the capacious forehead of the foe.  
 Then with a cry, as loud and terrible  
 As Libyan lions roaring for their young,  
 Quite stunn'd, the furious giant stagger'd, reel'd,  
 And fell: the mighty mass of man fell prone.  
 With its own weight his shatter'd bulk was bruise'd.  
 His clattering arms rung dreadfully through the field,  
 And the firm basis of the solid earth  
 Shook. Chok'd with blood and dust, he curs'd his gods,  
 And died blaspheming! Straight the victor youth

Drew from his sheath the giant's pond'rous sword,  
And from the enormous trunk the gory head,  
Furious in death, he sever'd. The grim visage  
Look'd threat'ning still, and still frown'd horribly.

SAUL. O glorious deed! O valiant conqueror!

ABNER. The youth so calm appear'd,  
so nobly firm,  
So cool, yet so intrepid, that these eyes  
Ne'er saw such temp'rate valour so chastis'd  
By modesty.

SAUL. Thou dwell'st upon his praise  
With needless circumstance. 'Twas nobly done.  
But others too have fought!

ABNER. None, none so bravely.

SAUL. What follow'd next?

ABNER. The shouting Israelites  
On the Philistians rush'd, and still pursue  
Their routed remnants. In dismay, their bands,  
Disorder'd fly, while shouts of loud acclaim  
Pursue their brave deliverer. Lo, he comes!  
Bearing the giant's head and shining sword,  
His well-earn'd trophies.

SAUL, ABNER, DAVID.

[DAVID, bearing GOLIATH's head and sword. He kneels and lays both at SAUL's feet.]

SAUL. Welcome to my heart,  
My glorious champion! My deliverer welcome!  
How shall I speak the swelling gratitude  
Of my full heart! or give thee the high praise  
Thy gallant deeds deserve!

DAVID. O mighty king!  
Sweet is the breath of praise when given by those

Whose own high merit claims the praise they give.

But let not this one prosperous event,  
By heav'n directed, be ascrib'd to me;  
I might have fought with equal skill and courage,  
And not have gain'd this conquest; then had shame  
Harsh obloquy, and foul disgrace, befallen me:  
But prosperous fortune gains the praise of valour.

SAUL. I like not this. In everything superior.  
He soars above me. (*Aside.*)—Modest youth, thou'rt right,  
And fortune, as thou say'st, deserves the praise  
We give to human valour.

DAVID. Rather say  
The God of Hosts deserves it.

SAUL. Tell me youth,  
What is thy name, and what thy father's house?

DAVID. My name is David, Jesse is my sire:  
An humble Bethle'mite of Judah's tribe.

SAUL. David, the son of Jesse. Sure that name  
Has been familiar to me. Nay thy voice  
Thy form and features, I remember too,  
Though faint and indistinctly.

ABNER. In this hero  
Behold thy sweet musician; he whose harp  
Expell'd the melancholy fiend, whose pow'r  
Enslav'd thy spirit.

SAUL. This the modest youth,  
Whom for his skill and virtues I prefer'd  
To bear my armour?

DAVID. I am he, O king!

SAUL. Why this concealment? tell me valiant David,  
Why didst thou hide thy birth and name till now?

DAVID. O king! I would not aught  
from favour claim,

Or on remember'd services presume;  
But on the strength of my own actions  
stand

Ungrac'd and unsupported.

ABNER. Well he merits  
The honours which await him. Why,  
O king,  
Dost thou delay to bless his doubting  
heart  
With his well-earn'd rewards! Thy  
lovely daughter,  
By right of conquest his!

SAUL (*to David*). True: thou hast  
won her.  
She shall be thine. Yes, a king's word  
is past.

DAVID. O boundless blessing! What!  
shall she be mine,  
For whom contending monarchs might  
renounce  
Their slighted crowns!

[*Sounds of musical instruments heard  
at a distance. Shouting and singing.  
A grand procession. Chorus of He-  
brew women.*]

SAUL. How's this! what sounds of  
joy  
Salute my ears! What means this need-  
less pomp!  
This merry sound of tabret and of  
harp!  
What mean these idle instruments of  
triumph?  
These women, who in fair procession  
move,  
Making sweet melody?

ABNER. To pay due honour  
To David are they come.

SAUL (*aside*). A rival's praise  
Is discord to my ear! They might have  
spar'd

This idle pageantry; it wounds my  
soul!

[*Martial symphony: after which, chorus  
of women sing.*]

I.

Prepare! your festal rites prepare!  
Let your triumphs rend the air!  
Idol gods shall reign no more:  
We the living Lord adore!  
Let heathen hosts on human helps re-  
pose,  
Since Israel's God has routed Israel's  
foes.

II.

Let remotest nations know  
Proud Goliath's overthrow.  
Fall'n Philistia, is thy trust.  
Dagon mingles with the dust!  
Who fears the Lord of Glory, need not  
fear  
The brazen armour or the lifted spear.

III.

See, the routed squadron fly!  
Hark the clamours rend the sky!  
Blood and carnage stain the field!  
See the vanquish'd nations yield!  
Dismay and terror fill the frighten'd  
land,  
While Conq'ring David routs the trem-  
bling band.

IV.

Lo! upon the tented field  
Royal Saul has thousands kill'd!  
Lo! upon th' ensanguin'd plain  
David has ten thousand slain!  
Let mighty Saul his vanquish'd thou-  
sands tell,  
While tenfold triumphs David's vic-  
tories swell.

HANNAH MORE (1745-1833).

JONATHAN  
A TRAGEDY





# JONATHAN\*

*A Tragedy.*

*An imitation of the best and noblest life is the very truth of tragedy.*

—PLATO (*The Laws*).

*... and if it be according to the old text, still better.*

—BYRON (*Don Juan*).

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

SAUL.....King of Israel

JONATHAN.....

.....Saul's oldest Son and Heir

DAVID.....Anointed of Samuel

SAMUEL.....The Prophet

ABNER.....Cousin to Saul

ESHAAL, MELCHISUA and

ABINADAB.....Sons of Saul

ARMORI and MEPHIBOSHETH

.....Sons of Rizpah and Saul

ADRIEL.....Saul's Son-in-Law

PALTI.....Saul's Son-in-Law

DOEG.....Saul's Chief Herdsman

ZIBA.....A Servant of Saul

ELHANAN.....A Lad

*An Amalekite, Cooks, Messengers  
and Soldiers.*

MICHAEL.....A Daughter of Saul and

*Wife of David and afterward of  
Palti.*

AHINOAM.....Jonathan's Wife and  
*their two Children.*

MERAB.....A Daughter of Saul and  
*Wife of Adriel.*

*Women of the Populace.*

## ACT I.

*"And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.*

*"And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"*

*"And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him."*

I. SAMUEL, xvii: 25-27.

## SCENE I.

*The Vale of Elah, Saul in sackcloth, and with ashes on his head. Enter a Troop in like garb, singing:*

Turn unto the Lord,  
Speak but a word of bringing back  
again

The King of kings, and he will come  
to bless;

As on that day when fervent Samuel  
set

Upon thy massive overtopping front,  
The rule and majesty of Israel.

When a lion, fierce with heat and  
thirst

Doth range the burning sand, and finds  
at last

A palm-tree by a spring of water grown,  
He laps, and heaves his sides, and  
crouches down;

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Even so the fiercest soul finds rest in  
God,

Turn unto the Lord.

[*Exeunt the Troop of Singers.*]

SCENE II.

*The same. Jonathan alone. The combat of David with Goliath has occurred in the time between the first and the second scenes.*

JONATHAN.

Who can the stripling be, with courage  
swift

To sweep over the farthest limit  
reached

Among the mighty men of Israel;  
Whose sling and rounded stone has  
overturned

The huge Philistine? This boy, whose  
slender arm

Cannot poise even the spear which I  
can throw

Point-blank! My pride had fairly  
wished him slain,

But that his spirit seemed so vastly  
large,

As on he ran to meet the fierce Goliath,  
And swore to give his flesh unto the  
beasts!

Many left-handed Benjamites can sling  
A stone within a hair, if done in sport;  
But cool deliverance within the blast  
And range of such a savage monster's  
breath—

Here he comes—

*Enter DAVID.*

Fair youth, I know thy face,  
What is thy name?

DAVID.

'Tis David, son of Jesse,  
That Ephrathite of Judah-Bethlehem.

JONATHAN.

And where before have I encountered  
thee?

DAVID.

When I have sung within thy father's  
tent.

JONATHAN.

I would have known thee; but thy  
mighty deed

A glamour round thy stripling figure  
cast.

Who taught thee aim so sure and throw  
so true

No matter what the stake?

[*Enter ABNER, unnoticed.*]

DAVID.

Not long ago  
The mighty prophet, Samuel, seer of  
God,

Came to my father's tents, and there  
reviewed

The sons of Jesse, each of stalwart  
frame

Beyond myself, who am the youngest  
child;

Whilst I was on the plains of Bethle-  
hem

Watching our flocks. But unto none  
he gave

His approbation, and straightway he  
asked

That I be summoned. There upon my  
head

Pouring a horn of oil, he went his way.  
Since then no danger hath affronted me

Which caused my heart to sink; I  
turned my sling

Against Goliath with like confidence

As though against a sparrow casting a  
stone.

JONATHAN.

Anointed one! I cannot hope to reach  
Thy perfect faith. But I will doff thy  
cap,

And set mine own upon thy chosen  
crest;

Girdle my sword about thy slender  
thigh;

Cast my cloak about thee; cry unto all

That I, as prince in blood, a kinship  
claim,  
With thy majestic nature. For on my  
heart  
By thee this day thy figure hath been  
stamped  
And thou shalt current be in all my  
thoughts.

[DAVID *prostrates himself.*]

Up, up, arise! thou fitter prince than I.  
For I will have no service to exclude  
me  
From fellowship with thee.

[*Exit ABNER unnoticed.*]

DAVID.

Thou praiseth much;  
And much abusest thy superb repute,  
Who, with no one save him that bore  
thy shield—  
Knowing that no restraint is on the  
Lord,  
The God of hosts, to save by many or  
few—  
Didst charge upon the garrison that lay  
Behind the Bozez and the Seneh cliffs,  
Which stand confronting Gibeah and  
Michmash;  
There thou didst slay of Philistines a  
score,  
Within an acre, in half a furrow-length.  
How often have I heard the story told!  
Terror seizes them all; their battle  
lines,  
Which bristled like unto windrows,  
wildly tremble;  
And now the mighty army melts away,  
Scattering here and there, no two to-  
gether.

JONATHAN.

Ah, heavy woful day to me! For Saul,  
Without my having heard it, laid a curse  
On him who any food that day should  
taste.  
But I, with hunger fierce, dipping my  
spear  
In honey, ate; that I might farther still  
Drive on the battle. Thus like Jeph-  
thah's daughter,

Whose fate the Hebrew maidens yearly  
mourn,  
Upon my head I brought confusion  
down  
Intending service. For, when we had  
slain  
The foe to Aijalon, Saul sought a sign,  
And none was given. Then a lot he cast  
Between the people and himself and me  
To find the sinner. When the lot on us  
Had fallen, and another marked out me,  
The king straitly had slain me stand-  
ing there,  
Had not the men of Israel cried out  
And plucked me from him. Still the  
curse remains,  
And one day it shall fall, I fear, and  
crush me.  
Now shalt thou make a covenant with  
me;  
That thou wilt not cut off thy loving  
kindness.  
From all my house forever. May the  
Lord  
Require it even from thine enemies.  
For thou wilt stand beyond the range  
and spring  
Of such calamities as lie in wait  
For those whose feet the royal path-  
ways tread,  
In the glare and desert of publicity.

DAVID.

Oh, prince! Oh, Jonathan! Thy loving  
words  
Have moved the deepest waters of my  
soul.  
Freely I swear as thou requirest me.  
The Lord do so and more also to me  
If I do break mine oath. But what  
wilt thou  
Swear unto me?

JONATHAN.

That thou shalt ever be  
My brother, confidant, my heart's com-  
panion—  
But here is Saul; and, at his elbow,  
Abner.

[*Enter SAUL and ABNER.*]

ABNER.

Hath the slinger so quickly dight him-  
self  
In princely garments?

SAUL.

What is meant by this?

DAVID.

Take back again thy cap, thy sword,  
and cloak.  
My sling and sheepskin jacket fit me  
better.

ABNER.

Well spoken, shepherd!

[JONATHAN to ABNER.]

What is that to thee?  
If thou wilt such another venture take,  
I'll give my sword and anything thou  
lackst.  
If not, let thy promotion be but shame.

SAUL.

Son, our cousin Abner is in the right.  
Because this youth has overturned  
Goliath,  
Is he become thy peer, or thy supplant-  
er?  
When thou wouldst buckle him within  
thy cloak,  
Thou dost forget thy line, and he his  
place.

JONATHAN.

The youth is not at fault. He only took  
What I did press upon him. Such a deed  
As he today perform'd will make thy  
reign  
Renowned forever. Not a boy will  
grow  
To manhood, but must hear this tale  
retold.  
How grand the throne by such grand  
pillars propped!  
So thinking of him as thy loyal subject,  
And from his friendship seeking in-  
spiration,

I hung my sword upon him, put my cap  
Upon his curly head, and threw my  
cloak  
About his shoulders. Nothing more  
than this  
Was meant by me or David.

SAUL.

Well, let it pass.  
My cousin Abner, come.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

*Gibeah. Enter MICHAL and MERAB,  
daughters of SAUL.*

MICHAL.

Tell me, my sister, dost thou favor  
David?

MERAB.

And what is that to thee?

MICHAL.

A wedding, Merab.

MERAB.

Nay, not for me; I do not like his way.  
This boy, who scarce hath left his fath-  
er's flocks,  
Doth pleasure Saul with every winning  
art  
Like an old courtier; yet maintains re-  
serve,  
Subtle and proud, toward every other  
man,  
As though he might, one day, be king  
himself!  
And when 'twas told him Saul would  
have us wed,  
"Who am I," quoth the artful hypo-  
crite,  
"Poor shepherd, to be made the sov-  
ereign's son?"  
He seeks enrichment at the hand of  
Saul,  
So Abner says. I know, I love him not.



MICHAL.

Lovest thou not the gentle Adriel?  
 Ah, sister, the Meholathite hath found  
 Grace in thine eyes, unless thy cheeks  
 do lie.

MERAB.

And thine, if David be not dear to thee.

MICHAL.

Didst thou not watch him fill his shep-  
 herd's scrip

With pebbles from the brook, and run  
 with staff

And whirling sling in hand, to front  
 Goliath?

Didst thou not hear his cry that all the  
 earth

Should learn there is a God in Israel?  
 I wept at once with rapture and with  
 dread,

And hid my face, until the troopers  
 cheered;

And then I looked and saw him set his  
 foot

Upon Goliath's neck, and draw that  
 sword.

And hew the monster's head off from  
 the trunk

As some fell forester might fell an  
 oak.

Would that he loved me! But he  
 knows me not.

MERAB.

He needs must love thee if but he knew  
 thee, Michal,

And he shall know thee. I will go to  
 Saul,

Our father, tell him that I love Adriel;  
 And, if this youth must wed with one  
 of us

It must be thou. Belovèd Jonathan  
 Will lend a helping hand; and well we  
 know

The king is ruled by him. Let us away—  
 Our hearts shall both beat happily to-  
 day.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*The same.* MICHAL. *Enter* DAVID.

MICHAL.

What brought thee here to me?

DAVID.

To see thee, here.  
 Jonathan gave me leave.

MICHAL.

And having seen?

Here would I tarry if thou dost permit.

MICHAL.

If not?

DAVID.

I go.

MICHAL.

To leave me here alone?

DAVID.

Nay, not in truth alone. Since thee I  
 saw

In princely-virgin, many-colored robe,  
 Breasting the morning when the sun is  
 gentle

Upon the hill, my thoughts have been  
 with thee.

MICHAL.

Tell me now, David, what thou thinkst  
 of me,

Unless it would not please.

DAVID [*sings*].

Thou dearer art to me  
 Than are the ruddy beams to morn,  
 That every dewy drop adorn  
 As jewels be.

Thou dearer art than showers  
Of gentle dropping are to spring,  
That swelling buds and verdure bring  
And fields of flowers.

The early beams above  
Bring light to morn, the vernal rain  
Brings beauty, life, and richest gain—  
Thou bringest love.

MICHAL.

'Tis beautiful if it was meant for me;  
But if composed another maid to  
please—  
It is not pretty to repeat it me.

DAVID.

'Twas meant for thee alone. I know  
none other,  
And not of any thought till I saw thee.  
I live a life of deepest solitude  
Guarding the sheep I tend; save now  
and then  
Some mystic traveler, upon a camel  
Swaying from side to side with rolling  
pace,  
Comes to my tent as shelter for the  
night.

MICHAL.

How dost thou pass the time?

DAVID.

Watching the sheep  
Or warding dangers off. A bear one  
day,  
Falling upon us, seized a petted lamb.  
I followed him and smote him till the  
prey  
Dropped from his jaws; and when he  
rose in rage  
I bearded him and slew and flayed him  
there.

MICHAL.

Is it not dreadful?

DAVID.

No, the Lord is with me

Most in the wilds; least where men  
are gathered.

I tend my sheep, and feel that I myself  
Am one among a flock Jehovah keepeth.  
My days are filled with strains from  
Nature's lips;

Breezes which, with their airy fingers,  
touch

The pendant forest leaves, or, swifter  
blown,

Twang the taut branches; birds of  
joyous song

Trilling aloft in furious ecstasy;

While, from the farther sea, the roting  
waves

Measure the moments as they fleet  
along.

When flaming day is gone, and heav-  
en's floor

With God's unnumbered embers bright  
is strewn,

I sleep upon a patch of tender grass

Upon the border of a rivulet.

There sweet composure the vexed earth  
surrounds,

And all the air is filled with gentle  
noise

Of sheep at rest, and insects, humming  
lightly,

And rhythmic lapping of the running  
water,

Which seems to flow along my veins  
and bathe

My body with a clean and cool refresh-  
ment.

But, Michal, now the plains are desolate.

MICHAL.

And all our tents seem uninhabited

When thou art gone. But we must talk  
no more.

[*They whisper together. Enter SAUL  
and ABNER.*]

SAUL.

What does he tell her?

ABNER.

Lies about the bear.

SAUL.

He slew Goliath on the Elah Plain.

ABNER.

Goliath died of sheer astonishment.  
It nearly killed me, too. Set him a task—

Say one who seeks thy daughter's hand  
must bring

A worthy dowry, and that he is poor.  
Send him to snatch his wealth at  
Shaarrain;

I warrant he will not return alive,  
And we shall know 'twas not the Lord,  
but chance,

That helped him win his victory at Elah.

SAUL.

I fear the Lord is with him.

[Addressing DAVID]. David, bring  
The proving of an hundred Philistines  
Slain by thyself, and Michal shall be  
thine.

Not wealth, but honors be thy dowry,  
boy.

Tarry not, begone.

DAVID.

The hundred men

Who stand between thy daughter and  
myself,

Shall pay the forfeit. Fare thee well,  
my lord,

And thee, sweet Michal. I shall soon  
return.

ABNER.

Let him who girds his battle-harness on  
Not boast himself as he who puts it off.

[Exit DAVID and MICHAL.]

SAUL.

He seems a menace and reproach to me.  
Michal must cause his downfall.

ABNER.

These Philistines  
Will make their bread of him. He'll  
trouble thee no more.

[Exeunt SAUL and ABNER.]

SCENE V.

*The same. At the gate of the city.*

MICHAL and JONATHAN.

MICHAL.

Will he in safety come to us again?  
Say, that for David there is naught to  
fear.

JONATHAN.

Well, I'll say this: That I had rather  
choose

His chance of triumph than the chance  
of one

Among the hundred living. There is  
comfort.

But dost thou truly love him, little girl;  
Or doth thy heart but trip to some new  
air?

Life without love is like a journey,  
traced

Along a way unknown; with love 'tis  
swift

Like the returning. Thou art proud of  
spirit,

And David masterful; he may not  
please thee.

Not wilfulness but love should light the  
path.

MICHAL.

Brother mine, thy love, thy wife and  
children

Have filled my life till now. But now  
—I fear—

I love him not, and yet when he is gone  
My heart is sad. When thinkest he re-  
turns?

JONATHAN.

What sound is that?

MICHAL.

The women crying "David!"

David!! David!!!” Is it not his name?  
He is returning. He hath slain the men.  
Can it be that he hath failed? No, no!  
The cry is “David! Victor!! Con-  
queror!!!”

JONATHAN.

’Tis he. Let us await his coming here.  
How grand, with triumph and with  
youth aglow!  
And, Michal, he hath triumphed over  
foes  
Worse than Philistines. Here the  
women come.

*[Enter a troop of women in gala at-  
tire, dancing and singing]:*

Saul hath slain his thousands,  
And David his tens of thousands.  
They who hate the Lord  
Flee before his sword—  
Flee till, robbed of breath,  
All are hewn to death.  
No Philistines live to tell  
How he leveled wall and well.

*[Enter DAVID and troopers.]*

DAVID.

Such over-praise is worse than none at  
all.  
I pray you cease.

MICHAL.

Hast slain an hundred men?

DAVID.

Yea; and the proofs I bring in twice-  
full tale.

JONATHAN.

Stay thou with Michal here, and I will  
seek  
Our father. Let the crowd at once  
disperse.

*[Exeunt Women and JONATHAN.]*

DAVID.

I come to claim thee, Michal. Shall I  
fling

Over thy head the banner of my love?

MICHAL.

At times I think me ready; but at times  
I tremble lest, in changing my estate,  
I shall but make unhappy thee and me.  
Do not be angry, David.

DAVID.

Nay, not I.

I guessed as much. A ship that beats  
the wind

Sweeps onward, back and forth, with  
swelling sheet;

But when she swings her prow to  
change the tack,

The sail, uncertain, flaps against the  
mast.

And so thy heart as strong and true  
will throb,

As wife or maiden, though it flutter  
now

Because thy hastening feet must leave  
the course

Thy happy childhood knew.

MICHAL.

How couldst thou guess  
That of my doubtings I would speak to  
thee?

DAVID.

Oh, there are ways; and sweethearts  
keep us guessing

Of many things—most what they think  
of us.

MICHAL.

I know a simple truthful little song,  
Learned all anew since last I saw thee  
here.

Wilt thou attend, whilst I discourse to  
thee?

DAVID.

With all my ears, sweet Michal, and  
my heart.

MICHAL.

Now, do not be provoked; for, though  
'tis frank,  
It ends with loving words, and prettily.

SONG.

I think of thee when morning breaks,  
When early sunbeams creep  
Along the earth, and Nature wakes—  
If I am not asleep.

I think of thee throughout the hours  
When life's excitements rage,  
When thronging bees and birds and  
flowers—  
Do not my thoughts engage.

But when, at quiet eventide,  
The night-born breezes free  
In whispered plaints their loves confide,  
I think of only thee.

DAVID.

There's for each saucy stanza [*patting  
her on each cheek*],

There for the sweet one [*kissing her*].  
But come, my Michal, we must now  
prepare  
Against our wedding, lest thy sprightly  
fancy  
Be otherwise engaged.

[*Exeunt DAVID and MICHAL together.*]

## SCENE VI.

*The same. SAUL. ABNER leaving him,  
and JONATHAN approaching.*

JONATHAN.

David returns with twice an hundred  
slain—  
Philistine men—and claims thy promise  
now.

SAUL.

But where hath David buried all our  
foes?  
Saul slays his thousands, David his  
tens of thousands.  
Runs it not so?

JONATHAN.

If Abner come as herald.

SAUL.

It is what happened. What can this  
thy friend  
Have further but the crown? Would  
he were slain!

JONATHAN.

Sin not against him, father; he hath  
sinned  
Nothing toward thee, but all his works  
have been  
To thee-ward very good. He staked  
his life  
And slew Goliath. Thou didst rejoice  
in it.  
Why sin against his blood to take his  
life?  
For, though the wrong toward him may  
be forgot,  
Who shall intreat for sins against the  
Lord?

SAUL.

Nay, I exclaimed in haste and rage at  
talk  
Of armies slaughtered with his virgin  
sword.

JONATHAN.

The women's singing David checked at  
once,  
Saying that blame were better than such  
praise.  
There came post-haste a messenger to-  
day  
With news of great Philistine armies  
massed  
Along our borders, threatening descent.  
If thou or I should fall, on whom could  
either,  
Surviving, lean? Our wisest counsel-  
lors  
Are brutish; keen for evil, but for good  
Lacking all knowledge. Abner, double-  
tongued,  
Winnows with every wind. He would  
not help.



Cant, catch-calls and corruption are his stock,  
 Wherewith he cheats the people to his gain.  
 The Lord approveth David. All the troops  
 Follow him gladly at the King's command.  
 And he doth laud thee to them, calling thee  
 The grace of Israel who hath decked her daughters  
 In scarlet cloth and ornaments of gold;  
 Swift as the eagle, as the lion strong,  
 Beating the foe as dust before the blast;  
 Making thy people rest until the dawn.  
 No new-born grace is his, but courtesy  
 Ingrained through all his honored parent-stock.  
 And Michal loves him. Only now they met.  
 He comes in modest triumph. I see them there  
 Under the shadow of yon ancient cedar.  
 If I should call them, surely thou wilt bless.

SAUL.

Nothing can I deny thee, Jonathan,  
 For, since thy childhood, thou to me hast been  
 A ray of sunshine gladdening mine eyes.  
 Go then, my son, and call the lovers here.  
 If David swear that he will never fail  
 In loyalty to thee when I am gone,  
 As God doth live, his life shall not be sought.  
 The Lord has poured his favor thick on him,  
 And he can aid us.

JONATHAN.

I will fetch them here.

[Exit JONATHAN.]

SAUL [alone].

Strong as the lion, as the eagle swift,  
 Driving the foe as chaff before the wind.

[Re-enter JONATHAN with DAVID and MICHAL.]

Come, children. [To DAVID.] I have learned of thy success;  
 I welcome thee as son. But swear to me  
 That when my Jonathan shall be the king  
 Thou wilt sustain him, serve and honor him,  
 As God thy life shall prosper.

DAVID.

Even as required  
 So do I swear, as God shall prosper me.

SAUL [placing MICHAL's hand in DAVID's].

After the law of Moses, take her, son,  
 According to the custom.

[To JONATHAN.] A blessing frame,  
 And I will say amen.

JONATHAN.

Jehovah grant  
 Enough, and wisdom. May He bless  
 your lives  
 In youth with children, in age with children's children.  
 May she be to thee as Ruth to Boaz,  
 Whom, in her toil, Naomi's daughter gleaned.  
 May both, in Bethlehem, become as famed  
 As these from whom thou springest;  
 may you do  
 As worthily in Ephrathah.

SAUL.

Amen.

So may the blessing rest upon you both.

ACT II.

*"So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.*

*"And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.*

*"And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.*

*"And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?"*

I. SAMUEL xix:18-19, 23-24.

SCENE I. *The same.* SAUL and ABNER.

ABNER.

Rumor spreads that Samuel once anointed David at Bethlehem. I know not what it may mean; but he grows so great with victories, with women's talk, with Jonathan's alliance, and, most of all, because of his marriage with Michal, that all the people expect to see him king when you are dead, or possibly deposed. Who knows what he plots? And Jonathan would fall in with anything which looked to David's welfare. I do not now speak of certainties, but tell what I hear reported, and feel bound to bring to you.

SAUL.

Yes, but his oath. He swore that he would serve and honor Jonathan when I am gone.

ABNER.

Aye, but already was anointed. Possibly it augurs nothing.

SAUL.

Augurs nothing? Whom beside has the prophet ever anointed with his oil, barring myself? Tell me how you heard of it?

ABNER.

I overheard David telling Jonathan.

SAUL.

And therefore told me that all the people report it?

ABNER.

Yes, I count it mere boasting. Can you think such a tale is truthful?

SAUL.

Who can say? The Lord is with David.

ABNER.

And the prince; and, if I may add it, the king.

SAUL.

What have I done?

ABNER.

Married David with Michal.

SAUL.

She loves him dearly.

ABNER.

What is love in royal marriage? Policy should make all alliances within your house. Our country is new in kingcraft. Not a prince of Philistia seeks a wife, or gives in marriage son or daughter, nephew, niece, or farther relative, but looks to swell his state. So should you. There is Palti: rich, a loyal subject, a worthy son-in-law to a king. I urged him. He was passed by, and David was picked instead. What will David add to your throne?

SAUL.

Far more than Palti could add. That puny son of Laish! If one should say, "Leave following your wife, for I will take her," he'd turn tail. What stuff's in Palti to found a royal line?

ABNER.

Oh, if the succession be not through Jonathan, David were best—and readiest to seize it.

SAUL.

What can I do?

ABNER.

Declare the marriage void.

SAUL.

Will not God be moved to anger?

ABNER.

Can man profit God? We fool ourselves with fictions. Whosoever is wise will profit himself and afterward square accounts. Take Michal back. She may like his vaporings about lions and bears slain and flayed (though no one ever has seen a skin or a carcass). But all this is childish fancy. David thinks of nothing but religious dances and feasts. He composes psalms about himself or about your shortcomings; sings them everywhere. She will tire of his hypocrisy; and should David prove a Jacob, that supplanter who cheated Esau, and make the anointing an occasion to juggle Jonathan out of the crown, he will trouble her with other marriages, or, mayhap, with looser bonds.

SAUL.

But what will Jonathan think? And will the army endure it?

ABNER.

Leave the troops to me. Jonathan should accede, seeing all is done for him; and doubtless will. The prophet, and he alone, must know the meaning which lies beneath the anointing. Ask of him.

SAUL.

Samuel loves me not, and never has he sought me since that fierce affair of Agag. I shall not seek him. Go you instead.

ABNER.

And be cut in pieces like Agag, and perhaps my members be sent by Samuel throughout all the land, to call the tribes to arms and seize the throne for David? No, the prophet loves me not; nor would answer me. But this anointing—it must have been about the time when Agag was slain. Said Samuel aught to you of the kingship?

SAUL.

Yes; he said the Lord had rent the kingdom from me; that he saw one after His heart whom He would have as ruler—a better than I. But that is long passed, and I am still king.

ABNER.

And, following you, David or Jonathan; what matters it which? Both are sons.

SAUL.

Sons with a difference! I will seek Samuel and know this portentous matter.

ABNER.

Rumor reports that David hides now with Samuel. You know the thing to do should you find him there.

SAUL.

Trust me to do as wisdom shall dictate.

ABNER.

As to Michal?

SAUL.

Talk of that again. Leave me now.

[Exit ABNER.]

SAUL [*alone*].

With their mouths they show love, but  
still their yearning goes after gain.  
Abner is cunning, always seeking  
some private end under guise of  
public service. Yet he reasons well,  
and seems loyal toward me and my  
house; and I must let him gain his  
advantage, for the aid that he gives  
me. I may not muzzle the ox that  
treads out the corn.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. *The same.* SAUL and  
JONATHAN *meeting.*

JONATHAN.

Whither, my father, goest thou?

SAUL.

To Naioth.

JONATHAN.

What turns thy footsteps now toward  
Samuel?

He hath not come to thee nor thou to  
him

Since Agag paid the forfeit terribly  
Beneath his sword at Gilgal. What he  
meant

I never knew, nor why his long retreat.

SAUL.

'Tis this I seek to learn. If he should  
say

That God hath rent the kingdom, choos-  
ing one

Apart from thee, against my cherished  
wish,

Wouldst thou submit?

JONATHAN.

Shall feeble men oppose  
The agent called to do the work of  
God;

Or he who holds the crown by God's  
decree

Rebel against His own ordained suc-  
cessor?

Our kings will come and go in Israel;  
For God is over all, and, under Him,  
The regal mantle cloaks the one most  
fit.

SAUL.

Who is so fit as thou? A prince in  
blood;

Familiar with affairs of state, and  
trained

From boyhood up in kingly polity;  
Inured to warfare; raised above the  
need

To favor factions. If each succession  
brings

A king put forth by some ambitious  
house,

Rivalry fierce and wild will rend the  
kingdom

And order turn to chaos.

JONATHAN.

Doth then the crown  
Endure for generations? If the people,  
Yielding advantage, seek the common  
weal.

God will point out to each His choice  
for king.

Whoever rules, a station near the  
throne

Is sure to fall to me by general voice.

SAUL.

Better unplaced than second.

JONATHAN.

Yea, in pride,  
But not in service. Israel is still  
Jehovah's kingdom. Every man who  
works

As is appointed serves the Lord. Not  
place,

But power; zeal, not show of service,  
tells.

For God doth measure men by what  
they are.

SAUL.

Why, Jonathan, dost thou, at every  
 turn,  
 Thwart thus my purpose, and so interfere  
 Against thine own advantage? I believe  
 That David would supplant thee. Hath  
 he not  
 Told thee of his anointing?

JONATHAN.

Not as the king.

SAUL.

Art thou so blind? The ceremony  
 means  
 A choice as king or nothing. Would  
 the seer  
 Have sought him out, besmeared his  
 locks with oil,  
 And filled his thoughts with fancied  
 preference,  
 Without a purpose? Hold thyself aloof.  
 He plainly seeks thy hurt.

JONATHAN.

The seer found thee  
 Little in thine own sight, and made thee  
 king  
 Of all the tribes. From those who  
 rudely cried,  
 "This man shall not rule over us!"  
 arousing  
 Rebellious clamor, hast thou not enforced  
 Submission?

SAUL.

Pray tell me what's thy trend?

JONATHAN.

If chosen, and anointed with the oil,  
 To be the keeper of God's covenant,  
 The shepherd of His people, David  
 must  
 Of one and all receive obedience.

SAUL.

Why should that ancient and immured  
 recluse  
 Have put his flesh-hook in? The king-  
 ship falls  
 Upon thy shoulders by sure preference,  
 And they are broad enough to carry it.  
 Until I see the prophet, hold thyself  
 Apart from David. Give him no as-  
 sent.  
 For I will learn the truth.

JONATHAN.

And, learning, yield?

SAUL.

Enough of this. Do thou the rather  
 frame  
 Thy mind to heed my wishes. All my  
 thoughts  
 Are fixed on thy advancement. Should  
 I, then,  
 Be thwarted, and by thee? I seek the  
 seer.

[Exit SAUL.]

JONATHAN *[alone]*

Misgivings torture me. Our inter-  
 course  
 Has been as lovers. Doth the hour ap-  
 proach,  
 When thou and I must follow parting  
 ways,  
 Or I must quit, for thee, the better  
 course?  
 Farewell, farewell, farewell. Jehovah  
 guide thee  
 Along the path that leads to perfect  
 peace.

[Exit JONATHAN.]

SCENE III. *Ramah* [NAIOTH]. SAMUEL  
*alone. Enter SAUL.*

SAMUEL.

What purpose brings thee here?

SAUL.

I come to learn



The will of God from thee His greatest prophet.

Our scouts report the enemy as massed  
Beyond the Jordan. Should thy servant  
meet

The fate that lies ambushed for every  
man,

Who then shall fill his seat; and what  
shall he

Arrange against the chances?

SAMUEL.

Who, then, art thou?

SAUL.

The Lord's anointed.

SAMUEL.

Like the sow that is washed,  
And wallows again in the mire.

SAUL.

Samuel,  
I am the King. Thy rule is set aside.

SAMUEL.

It was not me they scorned; it was the  
Lord.

What God directed, that I did. But thou,  
A rabble-server, bringst the curse which  
falls

When slaves are throned as monarchs.  
Comest thou here

To learn God's will that it may be per-  
formed;

Or, learning, wouldst thou impotently  
seek

To thwart it? Once before, yea, more  
than once,

Thou, knowing God's command, didst  
yet prefer

Thine own devices. Hast thou changed  
thy heart,

Or is it set on some accomplishment  
Where thou wouldst have my favor?

SAUL.

What misdeeds  
Dost thou recall?

SAMUEL.

For one, thy sparing Agag,  
After Jehovah made his fixed decree  
That he and all his followers, his flocks,  
Women and suckling babes should die.

SAUL.

But my heart  
Was sorely moved for him.

SAMUEL.

Thy melting pity  
Savored of thrift. For all the weakly  
ones,

The women, babes, and scrawny beasts  
were slain;

The choicest camels, sheep, and kine  
were spared,

And cruel, mincing Agag brought alive  
To make a triumph.

SAUL.

But 'twas a stern decree.

SAMUEL.

Jehovah made it. Look how Joshua  
Fulfilled a like command, and made a  
heap

Of Ai, where he left them none to  
breathe.

Often Jehovah's anger was inflamed  
Against the people, seeing every man  
Do what was pleasing in his eyes; such  
crimes

As Sodom and Gomorrah wrought and  
burned for.

Wherefore He left them many times  
in bonds.

The hands of spoilers spoiled them.  
Sisera

Laid the whole land so waste that trav-  
elers

Walked in the byways. War was in  
the gates

Of all the cities. Midian encamped  
Against them, reaping every harvest  
sown,

Until nor ox nor ass nor sheep was  
left,

Nor sustenance throughout all Israel.  
Even the very ark itself was taken—

To force, by wonders worked, a swift return.

At times there rose as judges godly men,  
Jerubbaal, Ehud, Barak, Othniel,  
Bedan and Jephthah; I was one of these.

With them Jehovah wrought deliverance.

But still His chosen people fell again,  
And worshipped idols, Ashtaroth and Baal,

A petty god for every town and hamlet;

Though of the darkened nations all around,

Not one hath changed its gods—which are not God.

So when the people clamored for a king

And I at God's command anointed thee  
To be the prince of His inheritance

(The day when thou, thy father's asses lost,

Fluttered the maidens when thou soughtst the seer)

I loved thee much, and hoped thy sway might serve

To roll the tide of disobedience back,  
And keep the people from idolatry,

Till Shiloh come and fill the yearning earth

With grace of God, as waters fill the sea.

But God regardeth not the outward show,

As man must judge; He looketh on the heart.

That people born of Esau, Amalek,  
Whom He had sworn to war upon and blot

Out of all memory, was made a test.  
Yet thou didst spare the king, and keep the spoils

For bleating sacrifice, where God required

Obedience. When the Lord His people took,

As wayward children, by the hand to lead them

Out of Egyptian bondage, not to them  
Spake He of offerings and sacrifice;

But "Harken unto me," He said, "and walk

In all my ways, and I will be your God,  
And ye my people."

Though thy sin was great,  
And I had thoroughly cautioned Israel,  
That, shouldst thou practice wickedness, thyself

And all would be consumed, yet, none the less,

When God revealed His wrath, in prayer I wrestled,

That He, who had from Egypt pardoned us,

Even till now, might turn His anger back.

But He, of such beginning, knew the end.

The modesty, the singleness of aim,  
The rugged majesty that marked thee out

Fitly a king, are frecked, disfigured, shattered.

For low ambition, petty policy,  
Paltry excuses spun to cloak thy sins,

Have raveled out thy mind. God needs thee not.

Like the false light that comes before the morning,

Thou must pass. The Lord in anger gave

And in His wrath he taketh thee away.  
For he hath found another implement

Fitter to chisel out His grand design,  
And thou art cast aside.

SAUL.

My God! My God!  
Why hath He turned His face away from me?

My sin is great, but I repent of it  
In dust and ashes! Shall a king be

whelmed  
Like a poor merchant, whom a single

act  
Of folly steeped in ruin?

SAMUEL.

'Twas not thine acts  
That wrought thy downfall. Disobedience,

Rebellion, stubbornness, the reckless will

That brought thee here to question  
God's decree

And compass David's death—'tis this  
destroys  
The part of thee that might have stood.  
The end  
Will follow soon. Thinkst thou the  
matter light  
That thou shouldst break the bond of  
God's control,  
And waste the blessing promised? Is  
it light  
That thou hast tempted God to pour on  
us,  
In all its wrath, the curse pronounced  
by Moses:  
That even the gentle breeze which  
bringeth rain  
Shall turn to the whirlwind driving  
sand and hail?  
Our towns be compassed round with  
savage foes,  
Their very tongue unknown; our loving  
men  
Shall turn an evil eye on all held dear;  
Our tender women, who, for dainti-  
ness,  
Would not adventure even to tread the  
ground,  
Shall fain devour the little ones that  
come  
Between their feet; and that God's  
chosen people,  
Tossing among the nations to and fro,  
At last shall sell themselves unto their  
foes,—  
And none shall buy them?

SAUL.

Yea, but, my son?

SAMUEL.

The Lord  
Will care for Jonathan. Jehovah sends  
me  
Hither and thither; something I divine  
From such employment; naught beyond  
is known.

SAUL.

Is there then naught that I can do to  
save  
To Jonathan the throne of Israel?  
No one than he is fitter. I will place

Upon his head the crown which I have  
lost.  
Yea, I will yield my life, as Aaron did  
What time his mantle fell on Eleazer.  
For I have loved him since I felt his  
breath  
Sweet with his mother's milk. His lit-  
tle feet  
That knew not how to walk, his boast-  
ful youth  
And his majestic manhood—Thou hast  
loved him.  
Why should he, too, be punished? For  
the law  
Of Moses teaches, for the father's sins  
The children shall not suffer.

SAMUEL.

Yet the sinful  
Upon the sinless may bring evil down.  
Not all the piety of Eli saved  
His household, when his sons did wick-  
edly;  
I, too, have suffered, but perhaps with  
guilt.  
Thy horn is broken. On another's head  
Have I the holy ointment poured, and  
he  
Shall rule when thou art gone.

SAUL.

Is all the honor,  
Which God hath heaped, departed from  
my house?  
The rains descend, the waters wear the  
hills,  
The vawning ocean swallows all at last;  
Of no avail is anything that is.  
Jehovah raised me from the dust of  
earth;  
Made me to sit at princes' feasts; my  
feet  
In highest places set; yet casts me off,  
As one that is an hireling when he is  
old.  
Who after me shall wield the scepter?

SAMUEL.

David,  
Whom thou wouldst slay, but God will  
keep from harm.

SAUL.

If aught is good that I have ever done,  
Here take my life, and give me burial  
In this thy mountain, as on Nebo God  
Granted to Moses; so that I may hide  
The shame upon me. As the moving  
floods

Fail from the sea, the river drieth up,  
So may I sink and waste, and none  
shall say,

"Where is he?" Let me die and rise no  
more.

Not till the heavens fall let me be  
roused

Out of my sleep. For I am one whose  
hope

Is in the grave.

[SAUL strips off his clothing and falls  
down.]

SAMUEL.

The Lord will soon enough  
Require thy soul. The shame is light.  
Thy load

Of wickedness is more than thou canst  
bear.

O weak and wretched man! While life  
remains

Seek thou forgiveness. May God pity  
thee.

## ACT III.

*"And he said unto him, Fear not:  
for the hand of Saul my father shall  
not find thee; and thou shalt be king  
over Israel, and I shall be next unto  
thee; and that also Saul my father  
knoweth. And they two made a cove-  
nant before the Lord: and David abode  
in the wood, and Jonathan went to his  
house."*

I. SAMUEL xxiii: 17-18.

SCENE I. Near Gibeah. JONATHAN  
alone.

Enter DAVID.

DAVID.

What have I done? What mine iniquity  
Wherefor the king, thy father, seeks  
my life?

As thy soul lives, there's but a step  
between  
Me and death.

JONATHAN.

But Saul cannot seek thy life.

DAVID.

He came to Naioth, where, with Samuel,  
I lay in hiding. Thrice he sent his  
servants.

Within the prophet's holy presence, all  
Were moved to prophecy. At last the  
king

In person sought the seer, and on him  
came

The spirit; all that day and all that  
night

He lay upon the ground and prophe-  
sied;

And men who saw him, asked in won-  
der, "Is Saul,

Also, among the prophets?" Thus the  
Lord

His purpose turned aside, that I might  
live.

JONATHAN.

To Samuel he went to learn God's will.  
He loved thee much; but now he dreads  
thy fame,

And hears in awe those mighty psalms  
of thine

Which on the wicked call God's anger  
down.

Tomorrow we begin to celebrate

The waxing moon; and, at the feast,  
thy presence

Is certainly expected. There, I hope  
That I may make between the king and  
thee

A reconciliation.

DAVID.

Jonathan,  
I must remain away.

JONATHAN.

Thy reason, David?

DAVID.

Dost thou recall the fabled wasp, alight  
Upon a farmer's wagon? When the  
man

Upraised his cap to strike, "Where-  
fore," said it,

"Shouldst thou prepare to kill me? I  
am here

With best of feeling." "Though thy  
feeling be

All that thou sayest," said the farmer,  
striking,

"How may I know but that, before we  
reach

Our journey's end, thou wilt sting me?"

JONATHAN.

What is the moral?

DAVID.

With men who fear thee do thou not  
consort.

When from the coming feast the king  
doth miss me

Say that I earnestly requested leave  
To go to Bethlehem, there to attend

A yearly sacrifice now being held  
By all my family. If he say thus, "It is  
well,"

Then have I peace. But should his  
anger rise,

Rest thee assured that toward me ill is  
planned.

So much I fear because we two have  
sworn.

But if in me iniquity is found  
Thyself shalt slay me here. For why

shouldst thou  
Bring me before thy father?

JONATHAN.

Have, then, thy wish.

Look thou at yonder rocks called Ezel,  
crowned

With trees which show the simple lines  
of winter;

Tall elms, like giant birds with wings  
up-lift

To soar, but still a-tiptoe. Mark the  
range.

Thinkst that I can shoot an arrow  
there?

DAVID.

I can if thou canst not.

JONATHAN.

I take the challenge.  
[*They shoot.*]

My arrow falls beyond.

DAVID.

And mine falls short.

JONATHAN.

Hide there at sunrise on the second day  
When I shall hither come for archery,

Attended by a lad; then toward the  
rocks,

As though at mark, three arrows will  
I shoot.

When the lad shall run to fetch them,  
if I call:

"Behold, they lie beyond thee!" go thy  
way.

But if I call: "The arrows lie this  
side!"

As God doth live, peace waits thee, and  
not harm.

DAVID.

Dear Jonathan, my life is in thy hand—

'Tis safer there even than in mine own.

And I would make thee keeper of my  
head—

But now I feel, looking to thee for help,  
That thou shouldst know the truth.

The seer at last

Revealed the meaning hidden under-  
neath

The ceremony, where he poured the oil  
Upon my head in Bethlehem.

JONATHAN.

Of the which  
Thou hast already told me?



DAVID.

Yea, when I flung  
Goliath down. Saul, too, the meaning  
learned.

JONATHAN.

At Ramah?

DAVID.

Yes.

JONATHAN.

My David, brother, friend,  
Thou needst not fear to speak the truth  
to me.  
Is not God's oath between us? Tell  
me, then,  
If He will make thee king instead of  
me.

DAVID.

God's gifts are tempered when they  
are bestowed.  
After full many years of toil they come;  
Or, if in youth, then bringing sacrifice,  
That they may be worn with meekness.  
Otherwise  
The heart becomes unmannerly, and all  
the fruit  
Is changed to ashes. Here we togeth-  
er stand,  
Brothers in law and love. To thee the  
crown  
Should come by due succession; yet un-  
to me  
It is decreed. My heart is sadly tried  
Thus to supplant thee. God's unchang-  
ing will  
Can not be turned aside. But thou shalt  
be  
My keeper over all, and in the throne  
Only will I exceed, as Pharaoh Joseph.

JONATHAN.

But will the king submit? Will all the  
pack  
That fawn upon him yelp him on to  
ruin?  
Will both of us survive the mighty  
shock

Should he resistance seek to force from  
me?

The foes of David, they who flatter  
Saul,  
And every one at war with Jonathan,  
Will press my claim, relying on my  
virtue

To compass my destruction. Now is  
poised

The curse which Saul declared. Of  
what avail

Are love and faith and service? God  
hath forged

Out of my buckler bolts that pierce my  
heart.

Without a place of refuge must I run  
Hither and thither. Swear to me again  
That thou wilt never cut thy kindness  
off

From me, my wife, and little ones.

DAVID.

I swear  
By great Jehovah. Yonder Ezel-rocks  
Shall stand as witness, hearing all the  
vows

Which we have spoken. Like the altar  
raised

By all the tribes that dwell beyond the  
Jordan,

These stones shall show that God, in  
choosing me,

Hath not a border set between our seed  
That thou shouldst have no portion.  
Courage, friend!

God is a shield to them that trust in  
Him;

And, like the wayward swallow still a-  
wing,

The curse without a cause alighteth not.  
The Lord will slay the wicked ones that  
strew

Our paths with adders' fangs. But He  
will search

Our thoughts, and surely show us how  
to tread

The perfect way.

JONATHAN.

I go now to seek the king.  
David, the hand of Saul shall find thee  
not.

But do not chafe under the checks that  
hold

Thy young ambition back; for youth  
can wait

Until the foot-falls of retiring age  
Are lost in silence, and yet run his race.  
After that Saul is gone, and thou art  
become

A king among the people, like a river  
Which doth bedew its banks and rageth  
not

(Where trees may spread their roots,  
nor fear the heat,

Bearing their blossom, leaf, and grate-  
ful fruit

Alike in years of drouth and years of  
rain),

If thou wilt have me serve thee then,  
'tis well;

Since we have both of us together  
sworn

That God the Lord shall be between  
thy seed

And my seed, me and thee forever.

DAVID.

Faithful,

Beloved Jonathan, farewell.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

#### ACT IV.

*"And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame."*

I. SAMUEL xx: 33-34.

SCENE I. *Gibeah.* ABNER. *Enter* DOEG.

ABNER.

Is all well?

DOEG.

All is well.

ABNER.

What news spurs to such haste?

DOEG.

Samuel lies at Ramah—dead.

ABNER.

As any Nobite?

DOEG.

Yes, priests and all.

ABNER.

Well, what else? Met you any one  
worthy of mention?

DOEG.

Some miles below, David—turned to-  
ward Bethlehem.

ABNER.

Send Eshbaal and Palti here. Tell them  
the news requires haste. Hold your  
peace about David, but spread Sam-  
uel's death through the town, that  
Israel may mourn. Hasten.

[*Exit* DOEG.]

ABNER [*alone.*]

Who threw the stone into David's  
bowl? It was his proper time to  
flee. Palti is only a spider to sting  
him with, and perhaps anger him  
into rebellion. As for Eshbaal, he  
will not stand the hair-test; but  
Saul will be so angered at David's  
flight, and so strengthened by Sam-  
uel's death, that he will agree to  
anything should Jonathan hold out.

[*Enter* PALTÍ.]

My Palti, you shall wed Michal forth-  
with.

PALTÍ.

What shall I do?

ABNER.

Nothing, most worthy Palti. And, above all, lest you muddle everything, say nothing; let the word die within you. Have no fear, it will not burst you. When I send word, betake yourself to Michal.

PALTÍ.

But what will David and Michal do to me?

ABNER.

Idyllic quarrels you must settle, my Palti. Leave David to me. I will arrange the thing with Saul. To be a princely son-in-law is worth—even marriage. Noble Palti, go.

[Exit PALTÍ.]

[Enter ESHBAAL.]

ABNER.

The seer is dead.

[Cries of mourning without.]

ESHBAAL.

All the people mourn him, the grandest prophet since Moses.

ABNER.

Let them mourn. Pressure of affairs stifles sorrow. The warrior-politician-prophet dead, David's hope dies with him. Who, now, will tell of that anointing, or believe it if told? You, Saul, Jonathan and I—no others hold it certain, barring David; and Jonathan must side with us. Would you be king?

ESHBAAL.

Jonathan will not side with us.

ABNER.

Let him go. Why force him to take a crown which he despises. Think of David, that captain of malcontents and beggars gathered-up from every cranny of Judea; think of him made king, and picking ministers from out his rabble! What respect shall we men of weight and substance find from such a motley crew? It shall not be. David has bored Jonathan's ear, and holds him slave for life. They cannot meet but Jonathan must be unshoeing himself. You shall take his place.

ESHBAAL.

But will Saul accede? When he returned from Ramah he seemed resigned, or dead to all hope.

ABNER.

Because your father hath eaten sour grapes, must your teeth be set on edge? Besides, he must accede. You know his temper. Jonathan, with him, rules him; Jonathan away, anger lashes Saul to fury. When Saul has caught the import of Samuel's death, which I shall forcibly expound, David shall envy the fox his hole to hide him in; and, if we catch him sunning, we will not smite the fellow twice. When the king is gone hunting with David, Jonathan will lose control of his temper—and of Saul. What say you, Eshbaal?

ESHBAAL.

Both Melchishua and Abinadab, being elder, should be preferred to me.

ABNER.

The younger cattle feed in the front. You, of all your father's sons, alone sustain him. Remember, the heel of the slow is scarred. Press on and the crown is yours. Now go, prepare for the feast.

ESHBAAL.

Does David come?

ABNER.

I trust so, but do not surely know. I shall seek the king, to tune his mind to our plans.

[*Exeunt severally.*]SCENE II. *The same.* SAUL and ABNER.

ABNER.

Your chief herdsman, Doeg, who dispatched the herd of priests caught assisting David, reports Samuel dead at Ramah.

SAUL.

I heard the wailing, and learned the news.

ABNER.

It is a happy chance. David's claim dies with Samuel.

SAUL.

How?

ABNER.

For lack of proof. The claim is based on the anointing, which no one knows of excepting David's family, and yours, and me. Their word will stand for nothing, and we will all deny it.

SAUL.

Yes, all excepting Jonathan, whose yea will stand against a world of nays.

ABNER.

But Jonathan will take the crown, or will yield the place apparent to a more filial son—Melchishua, Abinadab, Eshbaal, as you choose. One must be selected.

SAUL. \*

When were you appointed anointer? Did Ramah's seer bequeath his prophet's horn to you?

ABNER.

Have your fling. Then consider this: Jonathan rejects the crown; David, he approving, claims it; we oppose. How can we make headway without a head? All will be one to you, I will not submit to having a king made of this Moabitish thorn.

SAUL.

Quite right. A royal cousin serves you instead of kingly place. If David were king, Joab would be his Abner, would pluck the plums that David missed, and would find the gleanings better than all your vintage.

ABNER.

Ever so it has been since Jonathan bowed the knee to David.

SAUL.

What has been?

ABNER.

That your friends are put to shame, and your enemies rejoiced; and so it will be until a son appointed to take your place is named—

SAUL.

It is Jonathan.

ABNER.

—And shirks it not.

SAUL.

He shall not shirk it. If at the coming feast, finding occasion, you stir discord up with David, prompt some act which may appear to be directed toward my person, on the flash I will pin him where he sits.

[*Noise without.*]

ABNER.

What call is that?

[Enter PALTÍ.]

We might pick a quarrel over Palti.

PALTÍ.

Nay, by your leave.

ABNER.

We will start no strife for you to carry on.

SAUL.

If nothing better offers, he will serve.  
[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. *Gibeah. The Feast of the New Moon. Enter a procession of PRIESTS, chanting.*

PRIESTS.

Sing aloud unto God our strength;  
Make joyful noise to the God of Jacob.  
Take up a psalm; bring hither the tim-  
brel,

The pleasant harp, with the psaltery.  
Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,  
In the time appointed, our solemn feast;  
For 'tis a statute of the house of Jacob.  
It is an ordinance of the God of Israel.

[Exeunt procession of PRIESTS.]

*Enter COOKS, with caldrons, firewood, meats, &c. They prepare the feast and spread the table. They sing.*

COOKS.

Pick the choicest from the flock,  
Sparing neither lamb nor wether;  
Pile the fuel, branch and stock,  
Burning wood and bones together.

Heat the caldron till it boil,  
Fill it full of thigh and shoulder;  
Feed the flames with fat and oil,  
Never let the fire smolder.

[Exeunt COOKS.]

*Enter ABNER, with ESHBAAL, PALTÍ, DOEG, and ADRIEL. ABNER seats the others.*

ABNER.

The King will come soon. This seat upon his left is mine; Eshbaal next to me; Adriel next; Palti and Doeg will sit across from you, leaving next to Saul, and upon his right-hand, a place for princely David; for he seeks the seat of honor from the king. Jonathan must needs take the farther end.

[Enter MELCHISHUA and ABINADAB.]

Melchishua, seat yourself to the right of the place reserved for Jonathan; and you, Abinadab, upon the left.

[Enter ARMONI and MEPHIBOSHETH.]

The sons of Rizpah will sit upon either side, near the farther end. Guess, my friends, a riddle: Who is it eats the fat and drinks the sweet himself, and sends what is left to them that lack?

DOEG.

David, who eats all of the meat and leaves the bones for the rest of us to gnaw upon.

ABNER.

Scarcely timely. Adriel, give us a song while we are awaiting the King. Come, though your voice be ever so tuneful, to hear you is not worth coaxing for.

ADRIEL [sings].

Ho! for a feast when the moon is new,  
With hearty cheer and friendship true,  
And wine that sparkles like the dew,  
And lightens every face.

But when the moon is thin and old,  
And the midnight sky is dark and cold,  
It is, oh! for rest in the time untold,  
And a grave in a sheltered place.

[Enter SAUL.]





SAUL.

Son of a woman rebellious and perverse,  
 Hast thou not chosen him to thine own shame,  
 And to the shame of thy mother's nakedness?  
 While David lives upon the ground, thy rule  
 Will never be established. Therefore, send  
 And fetch him here, that he may surely die.

JONATHAN.

Why should he be slain? What hath he done?

SAUL.

He is a rebel.

ABNER.

Rebel!

SEVERAL.

Rebel!

JONATHAN.

Rebel

Because the King rebels against Jehovah.

[SAUL casts his javelin at JONATHAN.]

When traitors rend thee, call me back again.

[Exit JONATHAN. The feast breaks up in confusion.]

## ACT V.

"And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days."

I. SAMUEL xxxi:ii-13.

"And David lamented . . . over Saul and over Jonathan his son."

II. SAMUEL 1:17.

SCENE I. *Gibeah. Enter JONATHAN and ELHANAN, a lad.*

ELHANAN.

Will there be giants when I'm grown a man  
 As big as David?

JONATHAN.

Yes, Elhanan, doubtless.

ELHANAN.

Well, I can sling a stone, as straight as he.

JONATHAN.

Then, if thou bide thy time, thou wilt find a mark.

ELHANAN.

I fear they'll all be killed.

JONATHAN.

Nay, fear not so.  
 Each battle hath its giants; many lack Their David. Let me make trial of thy skill.

Canst thou a pebble sling to yonder rocks?

ELHANAN.

If I but find a stone that will sail, I can.

JONATHAN.

Here is a round and flat one. Do thy best;  
 'Tis always worth thy while to hit the mark.

[ELHANAN slings the stone.]

Well thrown. But couldst thou hit a giant there?

ELHANAN.

I'd run up closer.

JONATHAN.

Let me try a shaft.

[JONATHAN shoots an arrow.]

The wind blew that aside. Another, boy.  
     *[Shoots again.]*  
 Too much allowance. Just one other try  
 For yonder tree-tip.

*[Shoots a third time.]*  
 That was fairly shot.

ELHANAN.

There is no one else could do it.

JONATHAN.

Fetch them here.

*[ELHANAN runs for the arrows.]*  
 Behold! The arrows lie beyond thee,  
 boy.

*[Enter suddenly ABNER, DOEG and  
 TROOPERS in search of David.]*

ABNER.

Whom dost thou look for?

JONATHAN.

Answer thou me, instead.

ABNER.

I seek the traitor.

JONATHAN.

I have found him here.

ABNER.

Is David hereabouts?

JONATHAN.

Nay, Abner is.

ABNER.

I, from the king, my high commission  
 hold.

JONATHAN.

And David his from the King of kings.

ABNER.

Your proof.

JONATHAN.

Jehovah once was King of Israel.  
 He said to this one "Come," to that one  
 "Go,"

And they obeyed. Then rulers held  
 from God

Their high commissions; and, like a  
 lion's whelp,

Crouched in his lair, the young but  
 mighty tribes

Throughout the hosts opposing scat-  
 tered dread.

What find we now? Philistine armies  
 massed

Ready to spring on us; sheer in the  
 North

Judgment o'erhangs, and in the farthest  
 East

No hope appears.

DOEG.

Our hope with David hides,  
 And thou alone canst tell us where to  
 search.

We hear he flees to Ziklag.

JONATHAN.

Go, seek him there.

ABNER *[to DOEG.]*

If thou dost ne'er return 'tis something  
 gained.

*[To JONATHAN.]*

Hath not the king decreed? And thou,  
 of all,

Shouldst know, and not attempt to  
 thwart his will.

JONATHAN.

I thwart him not; the king is sceptered  
 right.

He may not let his cursed advisers seat  
 Themselves upon his throne. The

meanest subject  
 May front a king who thus unseats  
 himself.

ABNER.

He may, and lose his head—

JONATHAN.

To save the state.  
You eat the fat and clothe yourselves  
with wool;  
You kill the fatlings, but feed not the  
sheep.

You do not heal the sick, the broken  
bind,  
Nor in the desert seek the one that  
strays.

But he on whom the Lord hath set His  
seal  
Is hunted like a partridge in the moun-  
tains.

[*Re-enter ELHANAN excitedly. JONA-  
THAN is fearful that he may  
have seen DAVID.*]

Ho! My men! From tracking David,  
turn

And follow me, your prince. This  
shifty knave

Hath fooled the king to his own bet-  
terment.

The time is come when, like the elusive  
sand,

He with all them that follow him will  
slip

Here—there—away, and let the king-  
dom fall.

Stand you with me; or would you flee  
with him?

TROOPERS.

The Prince! God save the Prince of  
Israel!

[*The TROOPERS range themselves  
with JONATHAN.*]

ABNER.

The king will punish this.

JONATHAN.

No hurt shall fall  
On one of these while my head keeps  
its seat.

[*Exeunt JONATHAN and the TROOP-  
ERS.*]

ABNER.

Go, seek out David; I have other busi-  
ness.

[*Exit ABNER.*]

DOEG.

And I will seek for game that's safer  
found.

[*Exit DOEG.*]

SCENE II. *A wood in the wilderness of  
Ziph. Morning. Enter JONATHAN.*

JONATHAN.

Here, said the message. I will plant  
my spear,

And hang my cap upon it; 'twas the  
sign.

Of all the kings of time the kingliest,  
David must flee because our paths have  
crossed.

Here will I see him and will strengthen  
him,

Lest he despair.

[*Enter DAVID.*]

My David!

DAVID.

Jonathan!

JONATHAN.

Thou standest on the mountain fair of  
youth,

Whence all the kingdoms of the teem-  
ing earth,

And all their glory, seem within thy  
reach.

Thy day will surely come. But I, who  
long

To see its splendor even as they who  
watch

Await the morning, shall have gone the  
way

Where no returning footsteps ever fall.

DAVID.

Let not the staff that I would lean upon  
Be snatched from me, while I am toil-  
ing on

Unto the cold and lone and .kingly  
 summit!  
 My flagging footsteps halt, my hope is  
 gone.  
 I cry aloud; and, in the vacant air,  
 My voice doth waste itself. Oh! brutal  
 age,  
 That finds no fitting place for such a  
 man!  
 If thou art gone, of whom shall I be  
 king?  
 Or, lacking thee, how shall I learn to  
 rule?  
 Flee, brother! let the host be slain, but  
 save,  
 To prop my kingdom, that majestic  
 form  
 Which long hath borne the brunt of  
 every blast  
 That beat upon the throne. Me thou  
 wouldst save,  
 When on the dizzy height of power I  
 stand,  
 From all the arrows which Philistine  
 wars  
 Or fierce temptations aim. Be ruled,  
 and fly!

JONATHAN.

But how, with such remembrance, could  
 I live?  
 My course is straight and brief.

DAVID.

Oh, bitter fate!  
 A kingdom flung at me with such rude  
 force  
 That thou art slain beside me! I must  
 pick  
 The fragments up; the throne together  
 piece.

JONATHAN.

The heavens, indeed, are black! Thy  
 star alone  
 Shines through a rift. Upon thy shoul-  
 der rests  
 The covenant of God with Israel,  
 The hope of all this world. Through  
 thee must come  
 An universal brotherhood, where now  
 Each man against his neighbor turns  
 his arm.

Not in the range of time hath one ap-  
 peared,  
 On whom such hope hath rested. David,  
 art thou  
 He that should come, or wait we for  
 another?  
 Thy heart—is it so fair as thy fair face?  
 And is thy soul, as thy courage, great  
 and high?  
 Canst thou upon thy slender body bear  
 The crushing weight of anguish cast on  
 him  
 Whose single life shall change the heart  
 of man?  
 Wilt thou wear out thy heart, thy soul,  
 thy life,  
 Like Moses straining toward the prom-  
 ised land?  
 Oh, brother! stand for God, though all  
 the herd  
 Shall trample thee to dust, though  
 children, wife—  
 All who may claim a seat beside thy  
 hearth—  
 Shall rend thee. Be a king in deed and  
 truth,  
 Though all thy subjects mock and buffet  
 thee.  
 The wrong may seem to triumph; but  
 the right  
 Is still eternal. God will teach thee  
 judgment;  
 For thou art called of Him to feed His  
 flock;  
 And guide them with the wholeness of  
 thy heart.

DAVID.

Oh, may He lead me in the perfect way  
 Which thou hast shown me. May He  
 come to me,  
 That I, within my house with simple  
 heart  
 Shall ever walk, nor base ambition  
 know;  
 But on the faithful of the land shall fix  
 Mine eyes, that they may dwell with  
 me in peace;  
 And I shall take my stand in line with  
 those  
 Who from the past, in great or lowly  
 place,  
 Have handed on our heritage of truth.  
 So may our parting chasten my sad  
 heart,



That still to all the world our love shall  
 prove  
 How friend may strengthen friend.  
 Whilst I but stand  
 As thou hast taught me, there is no  
 defeat;  
 And when I die I lay me down with  
 thee.

JONATHAN.

Go, brother, run thy course; and let the  
 end  
 Crown the beginning. I my father  
 seek,  
 For one last meeting.

DAVID.

God thy mission bless,  
 And grant the well-earned guerdon of  
 success. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III. *Near Mount Gilboa at night.*

JONATHAN alone at the door of  
 his tent.

JONATHAN.

Who looks upon this ordered universe,  
 And seeks no further than its marshal-  
 ing?  
 The pinioned reason beats against the  
 bars  
 Of nature's conservations; and escapes  
 To soar, and see the great Creator's  
 face.  
 The earth that stands at rest from  
 nothing hung,  
 The stars that cheer us in our tread-  
 mill lives,  
 God's diadem the sun, the sky serene  
 That guards for us the bounds of vision  
 —all  
 Proclaim by day and night the thoughts  
 of God.  
 As David says, there is no speech nor  
 language,  
 Their voice cannot be heard; yet  
 through the earth  
 Their line is gone, their words to the  
 end of the world.  
 We learn a little part, and say, "Behold,  
 It is nothing;" and the whole is hid  
 from us.  
 For, when the stars were placed and  
 taught their bounds,

Where, then, were we? Their paths  
 exemplify  
 The unchanging rule which brings for  
 us in turn  
 Summer and winter, spring and har-  
 vest-home,  
 Night and then daylight, even as our  
 God,  
 The Lord of all the hosts of heaven,  
 swore,  
 And with the rainbow his sure compact  
 sealed,  
 Shall still continue while the earth re-  
 mains.

If He ruled o'er the heart the tumult  
 stirred  
 In every bosom soon would still itself,  
 And all would be at rest. But now,  
 instead,  
 Hatred, rebellion, plague and pestilence,  
 Famine and fury, break the peace of  
 nature;  
 While things eternal pass unnoted by.

[AHINOAM, JONATHAN'S wife,  
 within the tent, sings.]

AHINOAM.

My heart seeks after thee, but thou art  
 gone.  
 Once we—oh! joyous years—  
 Shared with each other, hopes and  
 fears;  
 But now I am alone.

My hope still clings to thee, but thou  
 dost sleep.  
 Some day—oh! will it be?—  
 I shall be joined again with thee;  
 But now alone I weep.

[*Enter from the tent JONATHAN'S wife  
 with their two children.*]

AHINOAM.

Do thou not let the choice of David  
 weigh  
 Thy spirit down. For they who bear  
 the rule  
 Must act from policy; a lowly place  
 Admits of clearer life; and, in the end,  
 The virtues bred in secret make the  
 state.

JONATHAN.

The state is jarred to breaking. David flees—  
To Gath, to join with Achish there, I fear.

Jehovah's open enemies are camped  
Upon our borders, while his secret foes,  
Around the king, lead him, like Samson, chained;

And blinder, knowing not that he is bound.

All of his people, even the ark of God  
Is placed in jeopardy; our children, thou—

Nothing is safe.

AHINOAM.

The Lord will guard His own.

JONATHAN.

Yes; but who can submit him to decrees  
Which crush his heart? These prattlers, each afraid

Of the boo of the other—half afraid of his own—

If I be taken, what will visit you?

Affliction's net will trammel you, and want

Will come upon you like an armed man.

AHINOAM.

Then flee with us for safety, dearest love.

JONATHAN.

It would not be thy love who fled with thee.

If God shall grant that thou and I may live

Until the whirlwind of his fury pass,  
And David mount the throne of Israel,  
Together we will seek the cooling shadow

Of some great rock and dwell in peace and love.

AHINOAM.

Hast thou no pity for thy little ones  
And hapless me, their mother? Must I look

To see thee slain, and some Philistine fiend

Drag us away; while thy dear body lies  
Upon the ground, for birds and beasts to tear?

Better that we should go the way of death

Than live when thou art gone.

JONATHAN.

These things, dear wife,  
I too have pondered. May my ears be stopped

In sleep eternal, e'er I hear thy wail,  
When thou hast lost the light of liberty.  
But if Jehovah hath for us in store  
Such fate, where fleeing can we find escape?

Yet may our children fill thy heart with pride,

When thou hast heard their praise in higher note

Than ever mine was sung in; may they rise

And call thee blessed. Loved Ahinoam,  
The wife I wedded in my stainless youth,

The dear companion to my plighted vow;

Thou hast rejoiced the heart which trusted thee—

Hast done me good, not evil, all our days.

Beauty and grace and dignity have clothed thee,

And kindness ruled thy life.

AHINOAM.

My staff, my strength,  
Full seven times the righteous man may fall

And rise again; and though he rise no more,

Yet in the thought of God and men remembered,

He marcheth on forever, triumph-crowned,

The victor for the prizes undefiled.

JONATHAN.

My little ones, my glorious wife, your path

Is like the parting branches when the  
 hart  
 Leaps in the thicket! I must watch  
 awhile.  
 Good-night, good-night, good-night.

[*He embraces and kisses them.*]

All that the chastened spirit needs is  
 promised:  
 The eternal God to be thy dwelling  
 place,  
 And, underneath, the everlasting arms.

[*Exeunt AHINOAM and the  
 children into the tent.*]

JONATHAN [*alone*].

How long, oh Lord! Wilt Thou for-  
 get forever?

How long wilt Thou withhold Thy  
 face from me?

How long shall I take counsel in my  
 soul,

With sorrow in my heart through all  
 the day?

Consider now, and answer me, my  
 God!

Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in  
 death;

Lest they that trouble me prevail  
 against me,

And they that cherish me be filled with  
 woe.—

But I have trusted in Thy mercy ever,  
 My heart shall yet rejoice in Thy sal-  
 vation;

And I will sing unto the Lord my God,  
 Because with me He hath dealt lov-  
 ingly.

AHINOAM [*in the tent, sings:*]

The sun will shine as bright to thee,  
 Thy smile will be as sweet for me,  
 As though he were not gone.  
 The world moves on without concern;  
 And this from thee I gently learn,  
 My little one.

While over thee my watch I keep,  
 Rest thou, and sweetly dreaming, sleep,  
 As though he were not gone;  
 And in thy slumber I will find  
 A balm to soothe my troubled mind,  
 My little one.

Grow on, unchecked, in every part,  
 In body, spirit, mind and heart,  
 As though he were not gone.

Life is still with gladness fraught;  
 And this assurance thou hast taught,  
 My little one.

[*Enter ZIBA, breathless.*]

JONATHAN.

What fateful tidings brings thee here  
 in haste?

ZIBA.

I am one of those who went with Saul  
 to-night

To Endor from Gilboa. Saul had called  
 Upon the Lord to learn the fate in  
 store;

But no prophetic word or sign had  
 come

By dreams, by Urim and Thummim,  
 nor by seers.

At last the king bade me to ferret out  
 A woman with familiar spirit vexed.

At Endor found I such an one, and led  
 The king unto her, cloaked in deep dis-  
 guise.

He asked that she would bring up  
 Samuel.

Something she muttered; then she  
 wildly starts

And cries aloud, "Wherefore hast thou  
 deceived?"

For thou art Saul!" "Woman, what  
 seest thou?"

"I see a god arising." "What his  
 form?"

"An old man covered with a robe,"  
 said she.

Then Saul divined that Samuel was  
 there,

And fell upon the ground. And Sam-  
 uel said,

"Wherefore dost thou disquiet me, see-  
 ing the Lord

Hath rent the kingdom out of thine  
 hand, and given it

To thy neighbor, even to David? Yea,  
thy host,  
All, come the dawn, Jehovah will de-  
stroy,  
And thou shalt be with me."

JONATHAN.

What said he more?

ZIBA.

"Thou, and thy sons."

JONATHAN.

My hour is come at last.

[*The dawn begins to break.  
Enter a messenger.*]

MESSENGER.

Saul doth cry out for aid.

JONATHAN.

Unfurl my banner.

Say that none else are called, save men  
like those

Who fought with Gideon, each from  
an hundred picked.

[*Exit messenger.*]

ZIBA.

'Twere better we ourselves should end  
our lives  
Than fall a prey to foes uncircum-  
cised.

JONATHAN.

God gave my life, and though of sor-  
row fulfilled

Hath it been, He alone shall take it  
away.

My heart shall not reproach me while  
I live;

My soul, unweighted, wing its flight  
from earth.

Thy worth I know and service; dis-  
allowed,

Since honor was made dishonor by the  
king.

Within this tent is all I hope to save

From sweeping desolation. Stand thou  
here

Until I am gone. Then flee with them  
for life.

To David go. Tell him thy present aid,  
Demand of him a fitting recompense;  
And ask that he fulfill unto my house  
Our covenant.

[*JONATHAN looks into the tent.*]

I will not wake them now.

Too many wakeful hours lie in wait.—  
But I should miss them more. The little  
ones

Will gently teach their mother how to  
live

A life whereof I am not. May the Lord  
Require of thee that harm shall never  
reach them.

ZIBA.

I will write it on the tablet of my heart.

[*TROOPS gather. Enter a second Mes-  
senger.*]

MESSENGER.

Saul is sorely pressed on Mount Gilboa.  
Abner is fled and, with him, Eshbaal.

Abinadab is slain. Melchishua  
Is with the king, and calls to thee for  
aid.

JONATHAN.

Farewell, my life, my love, my all—fare-  
well.

Form the troop in order! Sound the  
advance.

The king—my father—needs me. For-  
ward, men,

For God and Israel!

[*A bugle is sounded. Exeunt JON-  
ATHAN and the troopers and mes-  
sengers, leaving ZIBA alone at the  
door of the tent.*]

SCENE IV. On Mount Gilboa. Saul  
alone; JONATHAN approaching.

SAUL.

Why art thou come? Is not the hope  
of God

Departed from me? Flee, then,—with  
 Eshbaal,  
 Abner, and all who drew their breath  
 from me,  
 And now, as one infected, leave me  
 here,  
 To perish singly. May they die the  
 death  
 The malefactor dies, their hands and  
 feet  
 With fetters bound! And may there  
 never fail  
 Among their offspring one that an issue  
 hath,  
 A leper, one that falleth upon the sword,  
 Or lacketh bread! 'Tis thou hast been  
 the cause.  
 This crown, which I had lifted from  
 my head  
 To place upon thine own, by thee was  
 dashed  
 Upon the ground. Why dost thou come  
 to see it  
 Cleft with the sword that ends my  
 wretched life?  
 Out on thee, traitor! than David blacker  
 far,  
 Lacking inducement. Out, I say—be-  
 gone!

JONATHAN.

My troopers all are gone, but not as  
 thine;  
 For each has paid in full the debt he  
 owed  
 To God and king and country. Why  
 have these,  
 Whom I have drawn about me, perished  
 here,  
 While those about thee fled? But I  
 come not,  
 My father, to reproach thee. May we  
 die,  
 As we have lived, together.

SAUL.

My Jonathan,  
 Hast thou forgotten how I cast my spear  
 To take thy life? I have not called to  
 thee.  
 What then has brought thee? All thy  
 later course

Toward David, has to me an enigma  
 seemed.  
 Comment from men now fled has  
 spurred my rage,  
 Till I have thought to ride thee down  
 rough-shod.  
 But now, when death his net about me  
 casts,  
 Thou art come here to bear me com-  
 pany?

JONATHAN.

Confronting one another we have stood,  
 And, us between, has rested what has  
 seemed  
 To me a cloud of fire, lighting up  
 The path of duty; but to thee appeared  
 As a cloud of darkness. God the Lord  
 shone there.  
 Now let us stand together, braving all;  
 For what remains to us, soon will hap-  
 pen here.  
 The crown, which parted us, is lost to  
 both.  
 Then let us both forget the sorrow  
 passed,  
 In one embrace of joyous reuniting.

SAUL.

Let the Philistines take me, bore mine  
 eyes,  
 Set me to tread the mill where Samson  
 slaved.  
 Flee from me, mock me, spit upon me,  
 slay me!  
 Heap thou not coals of fire upon my  
 head—  
 Dearer than life itself, my hope, my  
 boy!  
 [SAUL takes the crown from his head  
 and places it upon JONATHAN'S  
 head.]  
 Thus do I crown thee, I, thine only  
 subject;  
 But, being king, I make thee king of all.  
 Now give me one embrace, and flee for  
 life,  
 That I alone may suffer for my sins.

[They embrace. A shower of arrows,  
 SAUL is wounded. JONATHAN  
 falls dead, and the crown rolls  
 upon the ground.]



Oh! for the universal midnight cry  
 Of smitten Egypt now to wail my dead  
 one!  
 Not all the loss of Pharoah and his sub-  
 jects,  
 Home-born and captive, when the Lord  
 in blood  
 Poured out his fury, could, in general  
 tale,  
 Sum up the worth of this my eldest  
 born;  
 And even the slightest faith by any felt,  
 Of those who, with the hyssop, sprin-  
 kled blood  
 Upon the lintels, would have saved him  
 me,  
 To wear my crown. Now goes he unto  
 death  
 Before me.

[*Enter an AMALEKITE.*]

Who art thou?

AMALEKITE.

An Amalekite.

SAUL.

Hold thou my sword for me to fall upon;  
 For anguish taketh bitter hold on me,  
 Because my life is whole within me still.

[*The AMALEKITE holds the sword  
 and SAUL falls upon it.*]

May thy soul stay for me, my Jonathan.

[*SAUL dies*]

SCENE V. *At Jabesh-Gilead. A funeral  
 pyre. Enter mourners, bearing the  
 bodies of SAUL and JONATHAN.*

DAVID meets them.

DAVID.

Thy glory, O Israel,  
 Is slain upon Thy high places!  
*How are the mighty  
 Fallen!*

Tell it not in Gath,  
 Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;  
 Lest the daughters of the Philistines re-  
 joice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircum-  
 cised triumph!

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no  
 dew nor rain upon you,  
 Neither fields of offerings;

For there the shield of the mighty  
 was vilely cast away,

The shield of Saul, as of one not  
 anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain,

From the fat of the mighty,

The bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
 And the sword of Saul returned not  
 empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and  
 pleasant in their lives,

And in their death they were not di-  
 vided;

They were swifter than eagles,

They were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel

Weep over Saul,

Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,  
 And put ornaments of gold upon your  
 apparel.

*How are the mighty*

*Fallen in the midst of the battle!*

O Jonathan,

Slain upon thy high places!

I am distressed for thee, my brother  
 Jonathan.

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;

Thy love for me was wonderful,

Passing the love of women.

*How are the mighty*

*Fallen!*

*And the weapons of war  
 Perished!*

THOMAS EWING, JR. (1862—).





DAVID AND BATHSHUA



# DAVID AND BATHSHUA\*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DAVID, *afterward King of Israel and Judah.*

THE LITTLE PRINCE, *his son.*

AHITOPHEL, *his chief counsellor.*

JOAB, *captain of his host.*

URIAH, *husband of Bathshua, and officer of David.*

ABISHAI, *Officer of David.*

NATHAN, *the prophet.*

ABIATHAR, *the high priest.*

FIRST ELDER OF JUDAH.

BOAZ, }  
SIMON, } *Revellers.*

A PRISONER.

AN AMALEKITE.

Princes, Rulers and Elders of the  
Tribes, Priests, Ziphites, Captains,  
Soldiers, Attendants, Etc.

SAUL, *the first King of Israel.*

JONATHAN, *his son.*

ABNER, *captain of Saul's host.*

Lords, Captains and Soldiers in  
Attendance Upon Saul.

MICHAL, *daughter of Saul and wife of David.*

MERAB, *sister of Michal.*

BATHSHUA, *granddaughter of Ahitophel,  
and later the wife of Uriah.*

ZOE, *nurse to Bathshua.*

AN OLD WITCH.

Ladies, Girls, Attendants, Etc.

\*NOTE: The text is that of the *second edition*, published in London, 1911, in the Author's *By the Way of the God*. It differs considerably from the first edition, London, 1903, issued under the name of CHARLES WHITWORTH WYNNE, the poet's pseudonym.

SCENE: *Palestine.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Forest, near Hebron.*

*Enter a number of girls, garlanded with flowers; some carrying timbrels, others small harps; Bathshua conspicuous. After some light movements, they dance and sing:*

### I.

How joyous the Spring is!  
How jocund the hours  
When the call of the throstle  
Awakens the flowers,  
When the merry, mad squirrels  
Their revels prolong,  
And the aisles of the forest  
Are ringing with song!

### II.

As the laughter of April  
Enkindles the Spring,  
As the song of the skylark  
Is blithest on wing,  
So stirs with new wonder  
The heart of a maid,  
When the first stars besprinkle  
The daffodil glade.

BATH. You strew your notes as  
lightly as the sunbeams:  
A veritable rain of skylarks' music!

SMALL GIRLS [*clinging to Bathshua*].  
Our holiday—how shall we spend it,  
Bathshua?

BATH. How can we spend it better  
than in such wise  
Singing and dancing? The forest's  
full of song,  
And dancing is the true accompani-  
ment

To hearts at ease. Here's sward for  
lightsome feet,

A carpet woven of needles of the pine;  
And there are tufted hillocks, lawny  
banks

Where we may sit and rest. Come,  
girls, lead off!

Those who would idly talk of sense-  
less love

May go elsewhere.

1 MAID. Why, Bathshua, of love?  
Have we nought else to talk about but  
love?

2 MAID. And is love senseless? this  
is some newer sense  
In Bathshua!

BATH. What do all maids desire?  
But I would have you know 'tis waste  
of breath

And want of sense to speak of it.

SEVERAL. Of love?

BATH. Yea—what is love to us?

2 MAID. A thing to dream of,  
And every time you dream find more  
entrancing.

3 MAID. O come, sweet dreams, and  
whisper of this love!

BATH. O why is all the world so  
full of love?

*Enter old witch, unobserved.*

WITCH. So full of love? Ay, ay—  
youth reckons not  
Love's pains and forfeitures. 'Tis a  
sad world:

I' faith a sorry world, a woeful world!  
Woe's me, woe's me!

BATH. Tell us your grief, poor  
mother;

We have the wish to mend it.

WITCH. Child, I have none,—  
At least not troubles such as mortals  
rue,—

Pity so fresh drops balm on older  
wounds.

Love and Sorrow. Sorrow and Love—  
Alack the day that thou wert born

For thou, dear Heart, shalt live to prove  
The Rose of Life hath many a thorn.

So beautiful! And oh, to think that  
thou

Must drink so soon of this same  
poison'd cup

—The cup of love! Ay—of life's bit-  
terness!

And yet to know the measure of  
earthly love,

That leaveneth much! Ah, bitterer  
indeed

Were life to Woman, did she lack  
that knowledge!

BATH. Mother, why dost thou break  
upon our play

With notes of such ill sound?

WITCH. I follow, follow,  
Now up and down the world, now  
round and round the world.

The throes of travail bring me to  
deliverance.

[*Taking Bathshua's hand*] I stand  
upon the threshold of all Time—  
Hist, child!—Quick, words! and image  
forth my vision.—

I see thee seated on a golden throne  
I' the golden gates of morning, about  
thy brow

A crown of beaten gold, and in thy  
hand

The sceptre of a queen . . .  
A thousand hearts give thee their  
benison!

For charity and grace around thee  
flow,

Like mists exhaling light . . . Thou  
shalt be loved

By him who is the very prince of love;  
And in thy children shalt thou be  
beloved.

For thou shalt mother him, the pride  
of men,

In wisdom greatest of the sons of men,  
And through that son's remoter Son  
bequeath

Unto the world the Spirit of all Truth—  
The Prince of Peace, Who shall thy  
sex redeem

From bonds of sin and ancient servi-  
tude,

Making the weak fit help-mate for the  
strong,

And adding to the glory of the woman  
The tender joy of true maternity,

Till motherhood become the basic law  
Of life—of life and nobler men to be!

BATH. The old dame turns my head:  
what would she say?

And I—what heaven-born grace in me  
abides  
To achieve such life—a simple, witless  
maid?

WITCH. And simpler for the fact  
thou art a maid.  
But Time will show; and when thine  
hour shall fall,  
Dread not the trumpets of the wind,  
Nor evil toward from mankind.  
Follow thy lord, follow thy lord,  
For love is of life the master-chord!

I MAID. She rides on air! It is the  
witch of the wood!

[*Witch vanishes.*]

BATH. What mystery, what wonder-  
realm of Fate  
Hath she unroll'd?

2 MAID. How now, sweet Bathshua?  
What of thy senseless love? If love  
shall bring thee  
A crown, and jewels, and the prince  
of love,  
Thou'lt surely never say love hath no  
sense?

3 MAID. Our Bathshua a Queen! let's  
crown her, all,  
And do obeisance to her majesty.

ALL. Your Majesty's most liege and  
humble servants!

BATH. Go to, you fools, nor mock me  
any more.  
Liker were heaven to fall than I to  
queen it!

[*Eerie music is heard, and a mystical  
light appears above them.*]

VOICE. Much greater wonders hath  
this old world seen  
Than that a lowly maid should die  
a queen;  
For all that hath been is, and all that  
is hath been.

[*They scatter frightened.*]

*After a pause, showing the failing light,  
Enter David and Jonathan.*

JON. The king will alter. Do not take  
his moods  
So much in earnest, his spirit frets  
him sore.  
It is more pain of body than intent  
To do thee harm.

DAVID. From less hath murder come.  
But that I saw the glint and leap of  
madness  
Flame in Saul's countenance, ere he  
could poise  
His javelin, my body now were pinn'd  
Against his palace wall, and thou the  
loser  
Of this thy friend.

JON. Thy life's star is too bright  
To pale before the fury of Saul's  
wrath.  
Dismiss such thoughts. More it con-  
cerneth me  
That thou so gifted, so divinely fa-  
vour'd,  
Shouldst pledge thy faith to such an  
one as I,  
Who fashion'd in a less heroic mold  
Am all unworthy.

DAVID. No more, dear Jonathan.  
Nature has bound our souls in such  
sure bonds  
Of amity that nor dissevering death  
Nor any hap of life that chain shall  
loose;  
Not even that sweet visionary love  
We dream of, thou and I—  
The meeting between heavenly voy-  
agers,  
That draw together like long-sunder'd  
stars  
To flood the night with their con-  
verging joy;  
That unity of minds, diversely strung,  
Resolving to one harmony; that spirit-  
love  
Which doth fulfil the life of man and  
woman,  
Which, unfill'd, leaves desolate their  
days.

JON. Death may deny the flesh, but  
not the spirit,  
For death is but the exchange for  
happier fields  
Where we may own the love so stifled  
here.  
Yet never maid shall steal my heart  
from thee,  
For there is not within the heart of  
woman  
Love such as thine. David, place here  
thine hand:  
Now vow, by that dear faith which  
seals us brothers,



Thou wilt not wreak thy vengeance  
upon Saul

Nor on Saul's house, that 'twixt thy  
seed and mine

Peace may for ever dwell.

DAVID. My Jonathan,  
How could I war against thee, or thy  
sire?

He is the King, Anointed of the Lord,  
And if I find not favor in his sight,  
Within myself the blame of variance  
lies.

Yet would I knew my fault! For if  
there be

A flaw within my loyalty or love,  
I had liefer, friend, that thou shouldst  
take and slay me—

[*Presenting his sword to Jonathan.*]

Silently draw this blade across my  
throat

That my vile blood might out, and  
that the traitorous trunk

Might shrivel and bleach before the  
light of day.

But, if there be not,—how may I  
change Saul's heart?

For verily there yawns an open grave  
Which way I set my face. Since that  
dark hour

When Israel's youth call'd out my  
young achievements,—

Won in Jehovah's name, and wholly  
His,—

Saul hath not miss'd occasion to undo  
me.

By violence now, anon by stratagem,  
He seeks my life; and whether by his  
hand,

Or waging war upon his enemies,  
What matters it the way by which  
I go?

Evil he sees in all my thoughts toward  
him:

I may not live, and hope to serve the  
king!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Gibeah. A room in Saul's  
palace.*

*Enter Merab and Michal.*

MICH. I have not seen our brother in  
such anger

As when he rose from table yestereve.

Alas, that his brave pleading was in  
vain,  
His zeal and his devotion for his friend  
Of no avail!

MERAB. David will prove his ruin.  
May Jonathan take profit of this lesson  
And league with his own kin. 'Twere  
tact to do so.

MICH. Thou wouldst stand by and  
see injustice done?

MERAB. If that I could not stem the  
tide of wrong.

MICH. Such tact must stand for  
cowardice, my sister!

Most tact so savours. Who fear to  
speak the truth

Too oft indeed are credited with tact,  
Or take it to themselves as ready balm  
To lull the sting of slow-awakening  
pride.

MERAB. I have no pride toward the  
King, my father.

MICH. And I have so much pride to-  
ward him, that I  
Cannot endure to see Saul wrong him-  
self

What time his evil spirit clouds his  
mind.

Thou wouldst impel him to the giddy  
brink,—

The tottering heights where sanity  
grows dim,—

By silent acquiescence in the wrong.  
For to comply with Saul when he is  
mad

But speeds him to his doom.

MERAB. Not to comply  
Might bring, methinks, a speedier doom  
upon him!

MICH. Thou caviller!

MERAB. Perhaps — May be—I care  
not!

*Enter Saul, Lords, Ladies and  
Attendants.*

SAUL. And hath yon fool, your  
brother, school'd his wrath?

Or vaunts he still his friendship for  
that adder

That's ever in our path, sliming our  
palace walks,

Seeking the undergrowth wherein to thrive,  
 And striking at us darkly through our sons?  
 Most noble friendship! that would league with those  
 The enemies of his house. Most loyal friendship!  
 Magniloquent in treason to his kin.  
 Indeed a friendship such as women feign,  
 Secretive and bemask'd. Men of true heart  
 Need no such guileful looks and words and ways!

MERAB. Dear father, what thou sayest mefears is just:  
 I would I could think otherwise. But, alas,  
 David was ever traitor at the core,  
 Traitor to man and—woman! And his heart,  
 Since that thy javelin fail'd a second time,  
 Hath now to black and icy hate congeal'd.  
 Henceforth thy life—

MICH. Hush, Merab! Stay thy speech.  
 Thou wilt repent thee of such hasty words.  
 Was David ever, then, traitor to thee? I should have had more pride than to announce it!  
 Slander like thine, my sister, cannot live  
 Beyond the bitter moment of its birth.  
 And thou, my father! shame on thy kingly mind  
 That could conceive and coin such wickedness;  
 David in league with Jonathan? Aye, if to league  
 Be but to set up bands of staunchest steel  
 About thy throne and thee—daily to vie  
 In loving fealty and true heart-service  
 Which shall commend him first to thy affection,  
 Then David is in league with Jonathan!  
 Then David is indeed the worst of traitors!

David, my heart's true husband!

MERAB.

Ha, thy husband!

Methought thy husband was a feather bolster,  
 An image stuck with goat's hair! So thy couch  
 Harbour'd no traitor then?

MICH. My gentle sister  
 Indulgeth a brave wit.

SAUL. Enough! Enough!  
 And you,—to call out shame upon my speech—  
 Who put to shameful use your marriage bed!

MICH. My noble father doth forget himself:

That which I did, I did to save his life.

SAUL. But yesterday it was to save your own;  
 Lie upon lie! So go you forth and prosper:

Deceive your sire as you have shamed your husband!

MICH. Either I would not willingly offend.

But if, from harsh necessity, I wrought  
 Some slight deception on my lord the king,

It was to save—Saul from himself, and David

From one unlike to Saul, Saul's evil spirit.

SAUL. Child, get you hence, ere you exhaust my patience.

David's your choice: look no more to your sire,  
 Henceforth you have none.

MICH. My father, O my father!

[Exit sobbing.]

MERAB. Take care she prove not now the greater rebel!

A woman scorn'd is far more to be dreaded

Than twenty men; men know not how to hate,

Their hates like mists before the sun disperse.

But woman, when she hates, hates once for all,

Hates with a fury that no force may quell,

Hates with a hate for ever at white heat

Till it burn on to vengeance, or consume

The vessel that can hold such bateless fire.

Michal is now the fiercer enemy.

SAUL. My Merab, can you speak thus of your sister?

MERAB. Of twenty sisters, proved they false as—

SAUL. False! Hath she proved false to you?

MERAB. I know not, father; But plots she not against thy life and throne?

And am not I thy daughter, and most loyal?

SAUL. Yea, more my daughter than your sister's friend, More loyal may be than loving!

MERAB. Traitors I hate.

SAUL. Ah, say not so; it doth embrace too many!

It is not good for human hearts to hate,

Howe'er incensed: there is no healing in it.

Bear with the injury and it will heal, Bear with the injurer and he'll repent.

MERAB. But, father, thou dost hate as well as I.

SAUL. Nay, child, I do get wroth upon occasion;

But hate is anger that hath petrified.

I never yet could hate beyond a day.

MERAB. I cannot hate, and unhate, in that fashion.

SAUL. Then had you better never hate at all.

For she who cherishes within her bosom

That generating Viper men call Hate, Irks her own flesh more than her enemy.

Else would she not in her close heart give hospice

For its dark brood to prey upon her peace.

For God requites us for our love or hate

In just such measure as we give them rule.

MERAB. Then the reward of David must be great;

For is not his whole heart an armed camp

Of treason and rebellion?

[Saul frowns.]

*Enter Jonathan.*

JON. Treason and rebellion! So-ho these common maladies, that do call

For a physician somewhat out of grace! What! are these fair ones rebels then indeed?

SAUL. The mothers, daughters, wives of rebels—All!

As if that weren't enow, your sister Michal

Must needs become the mistress of a rebel!

JON. David a rebel? No! The devil's prompting!

SAUL. Then get you to him there! [Hurls his javelin at Jonathan.]

(To lords) Out of my way! For I could mow you down

Like full-ear'd blades before the advancing storm.

[Exeunt all except Saul.]

Now Samuel is gone from me, who have I

On whom to lean? For these ungovern'd bursts

Must wreck my brain, even as they rack my body.

O Samuel! my confidant and friend, Why didst thou leave me in my hour of trial?

Why for one sin, one trivial sin forsake me?—

One small transgression that me deeper led,

Stung by the measure and menace of thy wrath.

The Philistines were at the gates of Gilgal,

And surely did I think thou wouldst not come,

Or thy behest I had not disobey'd!

Yet how didst thou rebuke my fall from grace?

Thou turn'dst my fault to treason against God.

And didst revoke my kingship! Aye, much more—

Thou didst the downfall of my house decree!  
 Did sin of mine such retribution merit?  
 Surely God hath forgiven? forgiven me all?  
 And thou, my guide, my earthly counsellor,  
 Art thou still stubborn? Lies there no way to peace?  
 Is Saul for ever damn'd?—The face of his soul  
 Held up to him as in a threefold mirror  
 Wherein he sees all his defects of nature,  
 Without thy cold indifference to remind him?  
 Will nothing move thee? Can no prayer prevail?  
 (*Penitentially*) O Samuel, my advocate at need,  
 Come to me that my soul may strengthen'd live,  
 That I may feel once more God's Holy Spirit  
 Replenishing the hidden springs of life!  
 —Ah, no: it cannot be! The day is past!  
 For Samuel still keeps his vow of silence!  
 He hath anointed David in my stead!  
 My sons, my sons! if it were not for you,  
 Saul firm, tho' scarr'd, could meet the shock of Fate!  
 But Saul is damn'd—in heart, in hope, in kingship!  
 Damn'd! triply damn'd! and damn'd beyond redemption!  
 Then Saul now bids defiance to Jehovah,  
 Spits at his temple, tramples on his priests,  
 Despoils his people. And for this same David,  
 Let me but once lay hands on him!  
 But once! [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*Mountainous country in the wilderness of Engedi. In the background limestone caves. In the foreground groups of soldiers, Abner and other Captains.*

*Enter Saul (stepping out of one of the caves).*

SAUL. Abner, this mountain search is wholly vain.  
 No man, however sorely press'd, would choose  
 These sun-baked slopes, this wild and arid desert,  
 For his concealment; and canst persuade me that  
 The crafty leader of a bandit tribe  
 Would let himself be taken unaware  
 Within these narrow wadys?

ABNER. Nay, my lord;  
 Yet cunning wears strange masks; and these same caves  
 Might well afford both shelter and concealment  
 To one hard press'd.

My counsel is we seal them with all speed,  
 Setting to North and South an ample guard.  
 Then at our leisure we may search them through.

SAUL. Nay, Abner,—loss of time.  
 On to Hachilah,  
 There in the forest we shall run him down.

ABNER. My lord, spare but the time for this one search;  
 And afterwards—to Hachilah.

SAUL. Afterwards,  
 Thou'lt still be crying afterwards!

ABNER. Sire, humbly I beg—

SAUL. Confusion take thy humbleness!  
 Humble thyself by swift obedience.  
 Set all our force in motion.

[*They move off slowly.*]

*Enter David (from the cave) attended by Joab, Abishai, and other Captains.*

DAVID. My lord, the king!  
 SAUL. David! do I indeed behold my son?

DAVID. My lord, thou dost behold a loyal servant:  
 One who, tho' sorely tried, remaineth true.  
 Witness this pledge of his unfaltering faith!  
 [*Holding up a piece of Saul's robe.*]

Wherefore, my lord O king, pursuest thou me?

Doth David harbour treason, or seek thy hurt?

If so, the occasion hath but slipp'd his grasp.

Why then shouldst thou believe in my dishonour,

And so prejudice me traitor, all unheard?

What wrong could I conceive against my lord?

Evil proceedeth but from evil men,  
And those who evil think encompass evil.

But every thought of mine toward the king

Is, as my hand this day, void of offence.

SAUL. David, my son, my son,  
How welcome falls thy voice upon my ear,

E'en tho' thou speakest to thy sire's confusion!

Saul stands before thy greater soul abash'd—

Saul, who doth own no master but Jehovah,

Humbles himself and his high pride to thee.

How have I wrong'd thee, son, this many a day!

And, ah, how nobly hast thou me requited!

For who would so have spared his adversary?

May the great God reward thee for thy zeal,

Thy tender care and dutiful devotion!

Ay, and He will reward thee.—For remember

Saul also hath been known among the prophets!—

Thou shalt be father to a line of kings,

Prouder than any that have walk'd the earth,

Greater than any from the dawn of Time;

Thou art the herald of a world-wide hope,

In thee the Sun of Israel shall not set

But flame on the hills for ever! . . .

Come thou near,

That I may lean upon thee as of old.

Few are there now on whom my age may lean,

And if that few were fewer it were well! [Exeunt.]

## ACT. II

SCENE I.—*Saul seated under a tree in Ramah; Merab, Michal, Jonathan, Abner, Lords and Ladies in attendance. At the hour of sundown.*

ABNER. The king looks sad.

SAUL. And so wouldst thou look, Abner,

If thou hadst won a kingdom with thy prowess

And saw it slowly, slowly slipping from thee,

As steadily as sinks yon western orb. The night is coming up, and I must die,

—Pass, and leave all I have to other hands

And those not of my blood! What vails it that

I look'd death in the face a thousand times,

If that my victories serve to disinherit My own true sons? David is not my kin—

ABNER. Nor shall he reign, whilst one of thy royal house

Yet lives, and this my sword can speak for justice!

SAUL. I know thee, trusty friend; but I have sworn.

MERAB. Under misapprehension: David trick'd thee!—

He knew far better than to lay his hand

Upon the person of the Lord's Anointed,

With Abner and three thousand men near-by,

Himself scarce able to command five hundred.

Be sure that David weigh'd the odds of battle

Ere he had made a virtue of his fear, And staked his all upon thy clemency.

His ready wit stood him for double gain—

Renewal of his life, and of Saul's favour;



For every moment's doubt did more  
imperil

One in so close a strait.

SAUL. Thou speakest well.  
And I, to have been so wrought upon  
by words!

Hadst thou been born a boy, my  
throne were safe.

My days had then gone down, serene  
and full,

With peaceful ebb upon Time's sound-  
less sea.

But when I look on these, my natural  
heirs,

I do despair for Israel! Sons have  
I none;

Thy wit is now sole bulwark to my  
state.

JON. And ministers but to a state  
diseased.

SAUL. Silence, thou fool!  
David will take the crown from off  
thy head.

JON. When David shall be king,  
then shall he know  
That the arm of Jonathan is strong  
to stead him:

Perchance as captain of his host,  
but if

He should assign to me some lowlier  
office,

Then will I serve him full as loyally.  
So that I serve him, matters not how  
or where!

SAUL. If David chooseth captains  
such as thou,  
The crown he covets will prove a  
crown of thorns.

MICH. Father, take back that taunt:  
it is unworthy  
Of your great heart, and wrongeth  
Jonathan.

SAUL (to Abner). David appears  
to have more friends than I,  
And—fashion'd from these loins: I  
have raised up

These children but to sting and canker  
me

With their invidious love for this  
usurper.

Enter Attendant (in advance of Ziph-  
ites).

ATTEND. My Lord, some men of  
Judah beg an audience.

SAUL. Bid them attend. What  
would you, men of Judah?

FIRST ZIPH. My lord, we bring  
you news of him you sought  
But lately thro' the wilderness of  
Ziph,

And drove past tarn and quarry. He  
is now

In hiding in the forest of Hachilah.

SAUL. Enough. Abner, within the  
hour we march:

Spread wide the net. This time I  
shall not spare him! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*The Hill of Hachilah.*  
*Night. Saul and his men asleep*  
*in their encampment. David and*  
*Abishai seen dimly groping their*  
*way amid the slumbering host.*

ABISH. My lord, here lies the king  
wrapt in deep slumber.

Into thy hands hath God deliver'd  
him!

Let me strike home: he shall not stir  
again.

DAVID (staying his arm). Nay,  
Abishai, I cannot hold him  
guiltless

Who would so use the Lord's  
Anointed. God

In His own way and time will punish  
him:

He will avenge me on mine adver-  
sary.

Take now the cruse that stands beside  
Saul's pillow.

David himself uproots Saul's spear.  
These tokens will suffice. We must  
away:

Faint glimmerings shoot up from the  
underworld,

And dawn is near.

[As they move off the dawn broad-  
ens, and several of the sleeping sol-  
diers awake. David and Abishai are  
next seen on the other side of a ra-  
vine, from which David hails Ab-  
ner.]

DAVID. Abner, thou valiant chief,  
stirrest thou not?

Are day dreams pleasanter than duty?  
Abner!

ABNER. Who calls unto the King?



DAVID. Lo one, indeed,  
More thoughtful of the King than  
thou! tho' less  
In his high favour. Surely, my  
friend, thou art  
A leader vers'd i' the strategy of war,  
Subtle and perspicacious in thy  
plans,  
Of manifold experience and resource,  
Yet wouldst thou be surprised if I  
should charge thee  
With grave neglect concerning thy  
great master.  
See now Saul's cruse and spear of sov-  
ereignty!  
Some enemy hath come too nigh the  
King.

SAUL. Is that thy voice, my son?  
the voice of David?

DAVID. Thou knowest my voice, O  
king, and wilt thou tempt  
My strain'd allegiance till it snap and  
fail?  
Are all Saul's promises of no ac-  
count?  
Is David's life so trivial a thing  
That he must hold it ever at thy  
mercy?  
Try me not overmuch, for I am frail.  
What evil genius stands beside the  
king  
To, prick him to such imperseverant  
folly?  
What woman's strategy lies veil'd in  
this?  
Show me my fault, and I will strive  
to mend it.  
For Saul is oft persuaded 'gainst him-  
self  
To his own hurt: and those, my slan-  
derers,  
Dare not to speak the thing which  
they affirm,  
Except as slanderers behind my back;  
For they are many who would do me  
wrong.

SAUL. David, I have sinn'd—sinn'd  
grievously against thee.  
I have believed that which I knew  
was false;  
Believed, because I wish'd so to be-  
lieve:  
Evil I had sought and hoped to find  
in thee.

But now I know thee for my own true  
son,  
Whose breast hath never harbour'd  
thought of guile  
But an exceeding goodness and great  
mercy.

DAVID. Alas, men oftener take  
their friends for foes,  
Than recognize a false friend when  
they see him.  
Let now my lord send one of his  
young men  
To fetch his spear and cruse. And,  
Saul! for that  
Thy soul was this day precious in my  
sight,  
So may the soul of David find redemp-  
tion

When he himself shall stand in need  
of mercy!

SAUL. Blessèd be thou, blessèd be  
thou, my son!  
For as in the beginning thou pre-  
vail'dst,  
So to the end shall David be victori-  
ous.  
Thou wilt accomplish much, for God  
is with thee. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*On the foreshore of the  
Great Sea.*

[Enter BATHSHUA.]

BATH. How good it is to come here  
from the plains!  
I cannot breathe enough of the sweet  
air!  
O to live free with the dear winds of  
heaven.  
Not pent amid the narrow haunts of  
men!  
—Of men, so burden'd with their sor-  
did aims!  
Have they no eyes to see the beautiful?  
No souls to feel what tender women  
feel?  
No hearts?—Ah, there's but one  
among them all!  
David, my heart's true idol—and its  
king!  
How valiant wert thou as thou strod'st  
along,  
Leading thy stalwarts to the tent of  
Saul,

Heading thy captains and thy men of war!

Brave face all flush'd with battle, flashing eyes

Bright as the noonday sun, and thy whole soul

Emblazon'd on thy god-like countenance!

I would give all the world for one long kiss

Of thy grave mouth; and yet, except God wills,

I may not even touch thy hand—I, who

Am but a lowly maid of Benjamin.

ENTER NURSE.

NURSE. Stay thee, Bathshua! Stay thee, my child—stay thee!

Thy poor old nurse has not the strength to follow

And scarce, I think, the breath.

BATH. I am sorry, Nurse; I meant not to outrun thee. The air strikes brisk,

And hard it is to hold my spirits in check.

NURSE. Yes, my sweet dove, I know't. I would have raced thee thirty summers back, and left thee standing.

Then was I lithe of limb and long of wind.

Ah, many a hardy and intrepid lover Found to his cost he could not capture me!

BATH. Come, Nurse, is this all truth? the unvarnish'd truth?

NURSE. Why, child, look at this in-step. Know'st thou not What that high arch denotes? It is indeed

Sure sign of a swift runner.

BATH. True, dear (*raising her skirts*). But mine Is higher: thou wouldst not then have outrun me!

NURSE. Certes thou art more nimble with thy tongue!

BATH. But with my feet?

NURSE. My years thou reckonest not!

BATH. Thou'lt not concede the victory! Dear Heart,

Let us along. The day is failing fast. Already makes the sun toward the horizon,

And we must homeward. Ah, what lovely shells!

I did not know the sea possess'd such jewels.

NURSE. Fine jewels! Why, they are only common shells.

Wait till thou see'st the jewels at the court:

Rubies and amethysts, diamonds. and—Why, child, thou art not listening.

BATH. Indeed, I am. There are no jewels at the court like these,

None half so fine, nor of so great variety.

Look, Nurse, upon this shell and tell me—Hath

The diamond of the court so many hues,

Or such transparency? the beaming ruby

A countenance like this?—

Here are the very waters of the sea, Roll'd into flesh of iridescent pearl.

NURSE (*deprecatingly*). Dear, dear! —My child! my child!

BATH. How few can look Upon a lowly thing and find it lovely?

—The lovelier for its lowliness! Even so

The vast, indifferent multitude would deem

This wholly mean and insignificant Beside some tawdry jewel of the

court, Wrung from deep mines with blood

and toil of men. He whom I love would not have so

disdain'd it.

NURSE. Who is this paragon of thine?

BATH. Ah, Nurse, That is my secret:

One that can look into the starry heavens

And trace God's finger there, or on the mountains

And mark amid their monumental calm

The immeasurable strength of their  
 Creator;  
 Or just as simply—for his faith is  
 large—  
 In the bright colouring of an autumn  
 leaf  
 Attest the Great Artificer amid  
 The russets, and the yellows, and the  
 browns.

NURSE. Indeed, these be great vir-  
 tues! but myself  
 Had just as lief prefer a man more  
 stolid,  
 Who look'd to *me* for beauty, not to  
 the stars  
 Nor to the dulling glory of the leaf.

BATH. To me for beauty! I dare  
 not think of that.

Yet at still moments all unbidden  
 come

Those chiming words, full-fraught  
 with mystery—

'I see thee seated on a golden  
 throne

I' the golden gates of morning, about  
 thy brow

A crown of beaten gold, and in thy  
 hand

The sceptre of a queen.'

NURSE. Thou art a queen  
 —A Queen of Beauty! and what hath  
 any queen

To boast of but her beauty? It was  
 for that

Queendom was given—and, when she  
 loses it,

She loses half her empery!

BATH. O heart of mine,  
 Could we be worthy of so great a  
 lord?

He only can give voice to all our  
 thoughts:

Could we not add some radiance to  
 his?

For we would so encompass him with  
 love,

That he must lovelier live and love-  
 lier die;

For Love is cardinal high-priest of  
 life! . . .

Beauty is but the blush-rose of the  
 body.

Give me the charms that blossom from  
 the heart!

Grace, that shall set the bells of his  
 soul aringing,

Sympathy, attuned to the fall of a  
 sigh,

Mute understanding, softly and si-  
 lently winging

To a home in his heart, none  
 knoweth so well as I.

Such the bright fetters that my love  
 would clasp

About his soul to keep it ever mine!

Oh, I could love, Nurse dear, if only  
 another

Could love me as *I* could love! Ah  
 me!

NURSE. Who is  
 This favour'd prince, for prince indeed  
 he seems?

BATH. Ah, sounds he not too like  
 a prince of faery?

NURSE. He must be faery prince  
 that wins my maid.

Comes such an one a-wooing?

BATH. Nay, sweet gossip;  
 But sometimes I have dreams of such  
 an one.

NURSE. God send thou mayst have  
 more than dreams of him!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Ziglag. At the entrance  
 of the city.*

ENTER DAVID, HIGH PRIEST, CAPTAINS  
 AND SOLDIERS.

DAVID. What news of Saul? Comes  
 there no messenger?

When last we heard the king was has-  
 ting North

To expel the invading host encamp'd  
 at Shunem,

And with him all the might of Israel.  
 The prize—the lovely vale of Es-  
 draelon,

The key to the trade and commerce  
 of the North,

The highway to the South. Philistia's  
 Lords

Have long set covetous eyes upon this  
 pass,

And now with their confederated  
 powers

They do await Saul's battle at ad-  
 vantage.

If he engage them in the open plain,  
 Israel is lost! Valour will not avail  
 Against the savage onset of their  
     horse,  
 The roar and rattle of their flaming  
     cars  
 That like a whirlwind sweep the floor  
     of earth  
 And leave but wrack and ruin in their  
     path.  
 Whatever hosts Saul might to these  
     oppose,  
 The heathen scythes would cut and  
     mow them down,  
 And shock them in close sheaves upon  
     the morrow.  
 But,—ay, and in that 'But' lies Israel's  
     safety!—  
 Back'd by their own inhospitable hills,  
 The Tribes may turn to all Philistia's  
     war  
 A tower invulnerable, and given a  
     leader  
 Hurl her back headlong! Yet no  
     leader comes!  
 For Saul is headstrong, rash, impetu-  
     ous;  
 And Jonathan too easily o'er-borne  
 In council, tho' none mightier in the  
     field;  
 Abner—a shuttle-cock between these  
     two.  
 My mind misgives the issue.

ENTER MESSENGER.

MESS. News, news, my lord!  
     [*Prostrating himself.*]

Scatter'd are Israel's hosts, while Saul  
     the king  
 Lies deep amid the slain.

DAVID. Saul—dead?

MESS. My lord,  
 When the king saw the battle was  
     against him  
 And that his sons were slain, himself  
     sore-stricken,  
 Merciful death he craved of his own  
     spears.  
 But all—I know not whether from  
     tear or grief—  
 Forebore. And whilst I watch'd, Saul  
     raised himself  
 Sideways upon his underpropping  
     arm,

Even upon the pivot of his thigh,  
 And cried aloud, 'If there be one with  
     courage,  
 Or friend or generous foe, let him  
     draw near  
 And ease me of my mortal agony.  
 Then, out of pity for a dying man,  
 I did for Saul that last and kindly  
     office.  
 And scarcely had the spirit left his  
     body,  
 When that proud man who had stood  
     by unmoved,  
 Immovable!—his whilom armour-  
     bearer,—  
 Stepping astride the massy, sinuous  
     trunk,  
 Fell heavily on the point of his own  
     sword,  
 Despairing to outlive his royal master.

DAVID. And Jonathan, how fared  
     he thro' the strife?

MESS. He was the first to fall, tho'  
     not until  
 A dozen wounds had bit thro' helm  
     and buckler.  
 He fought as one who reck'd not of  
     his life,  
 Exposed himself most freely, and  
     where he swept  
 The battle seem'd to ope and widen  
     out  
 Before his sword, so terrible his ire.  
 And when at last they bore him from  
     the field,  
 Far spent from loss of blood, he  
     made as though,  
 Between returning pangs of conscious-  
     ness,  
 He would have spoke, had not his  
     parch'd lips  
 Refused their office, mutely articulate;  
 Until upon one long and labour'd  
     sigh  
 He breath'd thy name and died.

DAVID. O Jonathan, my brother,  
 Dearer than life wert thou!  
 (*To Messenger*) What do men call  
     thee?

MESS. A stranger I, and an Amal-  
     ekite;  
 And hither have I brought Saul's  
     crown and bracelet,  
 Stript from his body.

DAVID. Base slave, offer'st thou these  
 As price of a king slain? and durst thou now  
 Face me with the red tokens of thy guilt  
 Warm in thine hand? thou art, indeed, a stranger!  
 Craftily and with colour hast thou spoken,  
 But,—that hereafter none may lightly lay  
 Rash hand upon a heaven-anointed king,—  
 Thee we deliver to a traitor's death.  
*[Exit Messenger guarded.]*

*[To High Priest]* Appoint thou this a day of supplication;  
 Let there be prayer and fasting. For to-morrow  
 We march on Hebron to convene the Tribes.

*[David then takes his tunic in both hands and rends it; next, turning to the people, he intones:]*

Saul, Saul is dead, Saul, Saul—and Jonathan.  
 The heroes and the captains are no more.  
 O Israel, where are now thy battled hosts,  
 Scatter'd and strewn upon Gilboa's Mount?  
 Wail with the sound of mighty lamentation,  
 For Saul is dead.  
 The bravest of the brave lies slain.

*[The people take up the refrain, and chant it after him as they retire.]*  
*[Exeunt.]*

### ACT III

SCENE I.—Hebron. *An open space. A full muster of the tribe of Judah. Enter David, High Priest, Joab, Ahitophel, Captains, Elders and chief Men of the Tribe.*

FIRST ELDER. Most valiant prince,  
 most reverend councillors,  
 And you thick-sinew'd sons of mighty Judah!

If to the privilege of age be added  
 Devotion to the people and the law,  
 Then need I yield to none priority,  
 Who can look down upon the oldest here  
 As yet a child in knowledge. For among you  
 Who can recall the scenes of that dread night  
 When the first messenger arrived from Aphek,  
 And Eli, eld-hoar priest, fell forward dead  
 On hearing that the Ark of God was taken,—  
 When thirty thousand of the sons of Israel  
 Chose death before defeat,—and when the westerling light  
 Threw back the lurid and portentous glare  
 Of Shiloh, that dear city of our rest,  
 Rising in smoke and fire and flame to God?  
 Those scenes were burn'd into my boyish brain.  
 Thro' the long years of manhood I beheld  
 The heathen tyranny, the alien yoke,  
 Our young men shackled and held to menial tasks,  
 Our maidens oft defiled, without redress,  
 The nation stripp'd to the bare means of life.  
 Until our lengthening cry of supplication  
 Jehovah heard—and raised up Samuel.  
 Under that princely judge, that noble law-giver,  
 Israel regain'd her strength, for the Great God  
 Directed all her councils. Happy indeed  
 Had she retain'd that governance divine!  
 Yet craved she of High God an earthly ruler—  
 And in that ruler is she now abased,  
 Her glory lies with him on Mount Gilboa!  
 And we must choose betimes one in his place;  
 For we are brought to no uncertain pass.



Unless the Lord doth lead, vain is the setting forth!

Exalt him whom Jehovah hath so blest—

The son of Jesse, by Samuel ordain'd  
And mark'd out for the Kingship after Saul.

JOAB. Compatriots of Judah! you have heard  
The speech which flow'd like honey from the lips

Of our august and age-inspired Elder.  
To that I can add little, but that little

I am prepared to back with my good sword.

Ye know me blunt of speech, but my weapon's edge

Hath not been left from like disuse to rust.

With *that* I shall uphold against all others

My liege's claim to the chieftainship of Judah.

Then for King David, I! and these my veterans

Will follow him till death. Long live King David!

TRIBESMEN (*with loud acclaim*).  
King David! King David!

AHITOPHEL (*as President of the Council*). I understand the tribesmen are resolved

To raise to Judah's throne the son of Jesse.

Nathless, it is most right and meetly fitting

That we proceed on lines of precedent,  
That nothing may be lacking to confirm

Our will, or prejudice the King's election.

Lo! unto you 'tis given, Scions of Judah!

Here to acclaim your choice. Those for King David,

Let the uplifted sword now testify!

[*Swords are raised in acclamation.*]

Will ye swear fealty to King David?

TRIBESMEN. Aye.

AHIT. Let Jesse's son stand forth before the people.

Most dread and potent Prince, art thou prepared

The kingly vows to ratify?—to rule Nobly and well, submitting at all seasons

Thy will unto the Will of the Most High?

To govern and strive but for thy people's good,

Faithful and diligent to the great charge

Entrusted to thy keeping? Wilt thou respect

The Law and the Commandments, and preserve them

As the true fountain of the nation's life?

Wilt thou redeem thy word wherever given,

That men may know there lives a king in Judah?

These vows wilt thou now covenant and keep?

DAVID. God aiding me, all these will I observe;

And hereby make my solemn attestation

To uphold the law, and make my people's will

My own. And on the sword of Saul I swear.

AHIT. Then David, son of Jesse, I declare thee

Duly elect, the father of this people. Designate and anoint by Samuel

King over Judah,—so shalt thou with full rites

Be 'stablished and confirm'd in royalty,  
Even at the hands of his august successor.

The Lord direct thy soul both now and ever!

ALL THE PEOPLE. Amen!

[*David kneels to the High Priest, who anoints his head with oil.*]

HIGH PRIEST. Rise up, King David, blessed of the Lord.

This day thou art ordain'd, under God's guidance,

To be the guardian of His people Judah.

Firm in the faith, and valiant for the right,

Go forth, nor fear the issue of that battle



Which thou must ever wage against  
 thyself,  
 For mask'd within lurks man's worst  
 enemy!  
 The stubborn will, the oft-unguarded  
 heart,  
 The ear that lulls its votary to sleep  
 Upon the giddy heights of crown'd  
 ambition,  
*These* are the foes most perilous to  
 princes!  
 Saul brought upon himself his own  
 vast ruin;  
 For jealousy grew round his royal  
 heart  
 Like binding ivy, that up the massy  
 oak  
 Climbs but to kill. Even so the tor-  
 tured Saul  
 In the grasp of hate declined. Then  
 putting off  
 The kingly nature, he his trust abused,  
 Fell foul of all true feeling—fled his  
 soul,  
 And by so devious shifts provoked  
 his doom.  
 Take heed of such! The Lord shall  
 be thy strength:  
 Place thou thine heart in His most  
 holy keeping.  
 My prayer shall rise for thee both  
 night and day,  
 The prayer of all thy people shall up-  
 hold thee.  
 God bless, and guard, and guide thee  
 to His peace.

DAVID. Most gentle potentate and  
 priest of God,  
 And you dread lieges of the tribe of  
 Judah!  
 The dignity which you have here in-  
 voked  
 Almost o'erwhelms me. Friends, did  
 I not feel  
 The sharp and stern compulsion of  
 the times,  
 I could not lay upon my country's  
 altar  
 This unstaunch'd heart that bleeds for  
 Jonathan,  
 With whom conjoin'd, in fortune and  
 in love,  
 I had hoped to rule this land in after  
 years.

God hath disposed it otherwise, and  
 all  
 Must bow to His high ruling! *Men*  
 are we,  
 And, tho' the loss of those we love  
 unman us,  
 Must brace our hearts, and put our  
 trust in Him.  
 Yet lay not upon Saul our great de-  
 feat,  
 For the Just God will not let one man's  
 guilt  
 Carry so far, nor for his grievous  
 fault  
 Afflict the many. We must look  
 within,  
 For the offence is even in our hearts—  
 We have denied our Maker, set up  
 idols  
 Of blind selfwill, and follow'd our  
 own pleasure  
 Even to the bloody steep of Mount  
 Gilboa! [*Subdued applause.*]  
 And now is come the reckoning! and  
 to us  
 The stinging, vile disgrace of routed  
 men,  
 And all the nameless horrors bred of  
 war.  
 Meet is it that we learn humility  
 From such dire chastening. Let us re-  
 turn to God,  
 And that which we in our poor wis-  
 dom deem  
 Irreparable loss, may be the means  
 Of strengthening us in fibre and in  
 soul.  
 Of Israel's host, Judah alone remains  
 Unbroken, undivided, unavenged!

[*Shouts of "Judah for Israel!"*]

Then let her be the centre of our  
 strength  
 Until the might of Israel gather round  
 her,  
 And we, the invaded, turn on our in-  
 vaders,  
 And break them even from Gaza unto  
 Gath.  
 Now let the fiery summons speed  
 forthwith  
 From tribe to tribe, until remotest  
 Dan  
 Have heard our battle cry, and Asher  
 know

We will not let the heathen sit in  
 peace  
 Upon his spoils. My speedy Asahel,  
 Bear to the men of Jabesh Gilead  
 greeting,  
 And tell them we would have them  
 near our person;  
 For that they gave fit burial unto  
 Saul,  
 Were faithful to the fallen. Men such  
 as these,  
 Staunch in misfortune, are beyond all  
 price. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*The Hill of Zion. Dawn.*

ENTER BATHSHUA.

BATH. Dawn!  
 The still, gray dawn; and in the fitful  
 East  
 The tender presage of another day—  
 A day so big with promise! One by  
 one  
 The starry sentinels have changed  
 their guard,  
 Their furthest fires withdrawn . . .  
 How silently  
 The morn arrays herself! . . . Soon  
 will the sun  
 Gild roof and dome and minaret with  
 fire,  
 And hasten on the hour of our rejoic-  
 ing.  
 This was no night for sleep! but to  
 receive  
 From the sweet, tender stars a spir-  
 itual grace,  
 A hallow'd benediction; for to-day  
 The Ark of the Holy Covenant re-  
 turns.  
 From Ephratah, even unto the steeps  
 Of woody Lebanon, the Tribes have  
 heard,  
 And all the Land shall break in song.  
 To-day  
 Mine eyes shall see the king. God  
 grant to me  
 One long, last look at his loved counte-  
 nance!  
 That by it I may live another year  
 And learn to endure in silence. O my  
 father,  
 Why didst thou thrust on me that  
 hateful marriage?  
 What thought have I in common  
 with this Hittite?

I had as lief be trod beneath his feet  
 As take his kiss—and now I must sub-  
 mit  
 To him in all things. One day's re-  
 prieve, O God!  
 —One day, for pity! And perchance  
 to-morrow  
 I shall be stronger, more content. . . .  
 To-day!  
 [A smile breaking over her face.]  
 Let me not mar it by remembering  
 him!  
 O my prince, my king,  
 This day is thine with every thought  
 of it!  
 Thro' the long watches of the silent  
 night  
 Our prayers have risen together; even  
 now  
 The same glad beams are springing in  
 thy heart  
 And mine. O, one in soul and spirit,  
 come!  
 Lead me to the sure haven of thy  
 rest.  
 Hark! like the sough o' the wind on a  
 distant sea,  
 Or the beat and thud o' the surf on  
 some lone shore,  
 Cometh the tramp of men. Hark! for  
 I hear  
 The shriller-sounding trumpets, faint  
 and far,  
 And the tinkling clash of cymbal and  
 castanet.  
 Now soars the voice as of a multi-  
 tude,  
 Pealing and swelling thro' the vale of  
 Hinnom—  
 Hush, hush, my heart! break not for  
 sudden joy!  
 With hidden music must thou now be  
 mute.

[The voices grow louder as the dawn  
 broadens, and the procession is seen  
 slowly winding its way up the Hill  
 of Zion, until it comes into position  
 before the gates of the citadel.]

ORDER OF PROCESSION.

Mighty warriors (*blowing silver  
 trumpets*).  
 The two High Priests (*in their cere-  
 monial robes*).

Seven Trumpets.

The Ark (*borne on staves by Levites*).

King David.

Priests and Levites.

Princes and Rulers of Judah and Benjamin.

Princes and Rulers of the more northerly tribes.

The children of Israel and Judah.

[*As the Ark comes into full view of the citadel, the Priests and Levites take up the following chant*]:

"Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered:

Let them also that hate Him flee before Him.

"Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest,  
Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength.

"Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness;

And let Thy saints shout for joy.

"For the Lord hath chosen Zion;  
He hath desired it for His habitation."

HIGH PRIEST (*standing before the ramparts*).

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:  
That the King of Glory may come in."

THE WARDER OF THE CITADEL (*from the ramparts*). "Who is this King of Glory?"

HIGH PRIEST. "Jehovah, strong and mighty;

Jehovah, mighty in battle."

[*The gates are thrown open, and the procession enters, the Levitical choirs chanting*]:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of Glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of Glory?  
The Lord of Hosts,  
He is the King of Glory." [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*The Gardens of the Palace.*

*Enter from one side, King David and his Captains, returning from plac-*

*ing the Ark on Zion; and, from the other, Michal and her attendants.*

DAVID. Comest thou forth in Miriam's dauntless spirit,  
With timbrels and glad heart of song,  
as after  
That fateful passage thro' the pillar'd Sea,—

Or, like that peerless maid, Jephthah's fair daughter,

With the proud light of victory in her eyes,

To greet her sire's return? For, verily,

God hath been gracious unto me this day,

Who of His infinite mercy hath vouchsafed

The great and long-withholden privilege

Of bearing to its rest the sacred Ark.

There on the Mount of Zion is it set,  
A jewel bright upon the Hills of Time!

For evermore the glory of His people,  
The loadstar of our race.

MICH. (*contemptuously*) When thou hast finish'd—

DAVID. What! dost deny me, Michal? This—thy welcome?

MICH. Thyself thou didst debase in all men's sight,

And dost expect of me a royal welcome?

Whom shall we welcome then—the King, the Priest,

Or the Baalite? for, like a wanton, thou

Didst dance before the Ark in light apparel.

Thou didst this day shame me to my handmaidens,

Lowering the priestly vestments to the dust;

And, for a king, thou madest kingly sport

In most unkingly guise!

DAVID. Michal, have done!

Profane no more thy lips with such wild speech,

Thy heart with such ill thought. Thou dost dishonour

Thyself unto all time, dishonouring me:

Nay more, thou here dishonourest thy God!

Of Him ask thou forgiveness. Henceforth, Michal,

Thou art dead to me. Withdraw into seclusion.

This day a curse shall light on thee. For barren

As is thy heart even so shall be thy womb!

Lo! unto thine handmaidens is vouchsafed

The honor thou hast forfeited—in that

My dancing was before the Lord Most High.

Alas, that the rebellious blood of Saul Must out—even in thee!

MICH. Shame me no more.

The king has done with me. Long live the king!

[*Exeunt Michal and attendants.*]

DAVID. Retire all ye: we would commune alone.

[*Exeunt Captains.*]

Such is the wife whom I have held so dear!

She can no more this heart reciprocate

Than the cold moon. Beyond the flesh, she knows

No wider range of possibilities!

Often I have thought a handclasp might suffice

For more than she can give, for in the touch

Of kindred souls are peace and satisfaction.

I have loved lightly as men love, but never

As I indeed *could* love, were I united To one, my spiritual counterpart

Who could unlock this heart with a golden key,—

The key of love: a smile, a touch, or a tear,—

Till it o'erflowed with rubies. Only to-day,

As the Ark of the Lord drew nigh its Hill of Rest,

I caught for a moment the eyes of a face in the crowd,

And my heart on a sudden stood still, and then beat high

With rapturous pulse that clamour'd above the crash

Of cymbal, and horn, and viol, for there—O there—

The heart of all hearts that the world can hold for me!

And a mist came over mine eyes, and I dreamt as we pass'd

That I had been face to face with an infinite bliss,

That the bitter drought of my soul was at last assuaged.

Those eyes! those dear, dark eyes are haunting me still:

Pray God I may find them at last! but of that I am sure,

As I am of the grace, and the joy, and the fulness, and favour

Of this day in a million years. [*Exit.*]

[*The last speech is delivered during the mystical hour of twilight. The scene has been gradually darkening, while the stars peer brighter and more bright through the cobalt sky. Now torchbearers cross the stage, and thereafter the gardens are seen to be illuminated and en fête.*]

ENTER GROUP OF REVELLERS.

BOAZ. Here's health to King David!

I have had such a supper as should sleep me into the new moon, if I am able to recognize the slim wench when she appears. Why, for such wine as this (*drinks*), it were a sin not to see the old lady—young lady, I beg her pardon!—double: dub her with the honours of a matron, and look over her sleekness, her slimness, her slender horn; she's a saucy one too! changing her smiles every month, just like the rest of her sex!

(*Catching sight of one of the girls mocking him*) O thou little, cozening trickster! the more I see of thee—

FIRST MAID. O shame! whom are you asking to see more of?

BOAZ. Well, let me think.—Ah, I remember, I was squillocising with the moon.

FIRST MAID. Fancy squililo—What do you call it?—squil-ilo-cising with the moon.

BOAZ. Soquillilocising, wench, so-quillilocising.

FIRST MAID. Soliloquizing, you old muddlehead!

BOAZ. That's just what I said: squi-squillilocising.

FIRST MAID. I should try and sneeze it out next time.

BOAZ. As if I couldn't pronounce a five legged word after a few cups!

FIRST MAID. Come away, then and mend your syllables and—your manners!

[*Exeunt Maid and Boaz.*]

SEC. MAID. Come, Simon, thou wert going to give us the King's dance.

SIMON. Ay, it was a fine step 'a taught us. 'A knows how to fling his legs about does the king! I think, after another cup (*drinks*), I might hit the step.

SEC. MAID. Thou art as like to hit the step with thy head as with thy feet, if thou goest on drinking.

SIM. 'Tis necessary to put one's head into one's feet to dance well: thou wouldst never make a good dancer, for thou hast not brains enough.

SEC. MAID. I have enough to make thee dance anyway.

[*Strikes him.*]

SIM. That's not brains, that's coercion, that is—force without brains.

[*Simon thereupon commences a wild dance, flourishing his wine cup in his right hand, and mimicking the king's performance before the Ark. In the midst of the dance Uriah enters.*]

URIAH. What folly is here? Is this how you repay

Our royal master's hospitality?

Were it not that the times are mutinous,  
I'd have you sorely scourged, you pestilent knaves!

Away! Uriah's sword frets in its sheath! [*Exeunt Revellers.*]

URIAH. Thus are our finer acts of service foil'd

By meaner minds, and all our nobler uses

Twisted and turn'd awry—our best affections

Check'd and diverted inward, but to warp us.

O who would nobly think or nobly dare

Did he but heed the end—Ingratitude? Of such is this world's justice! Have

I not striven,  
In service of a like nobility,

To wean my wife from fanciful dreams of love

To Love's divine reality—the cup That holds the sacramental wine of life?

For is she not my true and lawful spouse?

And am not I, of privilege, entitled To take her, and to bend her to my

will?

But could I hope *that* way to win her? No!

Ten thousand piteous, painful, stifling No's!

I have given all to win that pearl, her heart,

That precious jewel set in a shrine so beauteous

It ravisheth the sense to think of it. . . O Bathshua, Bathshua, have you then

no pity?

Come! I'll invest her with yet further proofs

Of my devotion, cut from my flesh if needs be.—

Such scars as make a soldier covetous!—

And if she give me not full love for love,

Then must I strangle her, or I shall stifle

In love that knows no end and no beginning!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Bathshua and Nurse.*



BATH. Oh, Nurse, this wedded life  
lowers darkling round me:

Never it seem'd to threaten like to-day,  
I feel that I must forthwith kill my-  
self

If he demand from me his perfect right  
—This body. How I dread him!

NURSE. Come, my child,  
Talk not so wildly; a thousand chances  
lie

Betwixt you and—Uriah. List! he may  
Be summon'd to the front.

BATH. There's a whisper of war!  
[*Uriah is seen approaching.*]

NURSE. One lightly putteth on his  
armour, but  
Other and stranger hands may yet un-  
loose.

One setteth forth who never may re-  
turn.

BATH. I quake at sight of him.

NURSE. Be brave.

*Re-enter Uriah.*

URIAH. What, Bathshua!  
Hast heard the news?

BATH. Who should convey it to me?

URIAH. The Philistines our ancient  
foes are up:

And we ere daybreak take the road for  
Gath.

The soldier in me rejoices! Now I  
shall

Gain honour, Bathshua, or leave my  
body

Where heaves the highest pyramid of  
the slain.

The glory is for you, my child, my  
queen;

But if God wills it that Uriah fall,  
Then deem his death but proof of his  
devotion,

Who died to win your love, so long  
denied.

BATH. You are a brave man.

URIAH. All men are brave in love.  
I could be braver for one little word;  
Tell me that I shall win to love at last.  
Silence, perhaps, speaks most! (*kiss-  
ing her brow*).

I shall return—

You feel the cold; the night is treacher-  
ous.

BATH. Ah, not more treacherous  
than I!

URIAH. Dear child,  
I know how hard it is for you to bear  
With one so rough as I—much less to  
love him.

Ah, but I could be tender, Bathshua!

BATH. I know't, Uriah; and there-  
fore do I say

That I am treacherous: for you de-  
serve

Far better. I—I am not worthy of you.

URIAH. Ah, no: you are too good,  
too pure, too holy!

I could wish you less saint and—more  
a woman.

[*Trumpet heard.*]

Belovéd! 'Tis my country that so  
calls!

I must away: bid me God-speed.

BATH. God speed Uriah!

URIAH. Kiss me upon my lips, that  
if I fall

I may send back your kiss with my  
last breath.

My loyal heart would greet you, even in  
death.

Ah God, one more! so sweet, so pure,  
so true!

[*Breaking away from her.*]

God keep you, Bathshua!

BATH. And you, Uriah!  
[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace.*

*King David rising as though from sleep.*

*Enter Ahitophel (bearing a cup of  
wine.)*

AHIT. I trust I did not break upon  
your slumber.

DAVID. I did but drowse, Ahitophel.  
The face

I saw but two noons past in the pro-  
cession

Dethroneth sleep.

AHIT. Could my lord but describe  
The face?

DAVID. Ah, that were difficult, my  
friend.



Yet speech perchance may aid thy quest  
of her!

So will I now endeavour to portray  
All that a momentary glance might cull  
Of her exceeding beauty. First then:  
her hair,

Wound like a diadem of rare device,  
Was wreath'd about her head in massy  
coils,

Showing the perfect oval of her face;  
From which there shone twin eyes,  
bright as the ocean

When the moonbeams flood the waters,  
and the dreamy deep

Is all a shimmer of silver; and on the  
marge

Two tiny isles of bliss—her coral ears;  
A forehead wide, yet smooth and  
womanly,

And spaced with arch'd and finely pen-  
cil'd brows;

A mouth distilling sweetness — the  
lower lip

Hung like a clustering peach warm i'  
the sun,

Yet ripe with summer fullness; her  
melting charms

Converging in the roundest dimpled  
chin

That the soft kiss of love e'er lighted  
on.

I tell thee, man, that every sense grew  
faint

At sight of workmanship so exquisite.  
And now the thought of her doth drive  
me mad,

For fear fruition may not crown de-  
sire.

[*Strolling toward window.*]

AHIT. (*aside*). It well describes her.

DAVID. Didst thou speak?

AHIT. Methinks

My lord hath praised her beauty over-  
much.

DAVID. In no way. What fair dwell-  
ing have we here,  
That buttress'd leans against my pal-  
ace wall,

Whose garden-roof this window over-  
looks?

AHIT. It is the home of two new-  
wed. Uriah,

Thy general, was pleased to take to  
wife

The daughter of my son Eliam.

DAVID. So!

She is . . . beautiful?

AHIT. My lord, she is so reported;  
Although for me hard were it to pro-  
nounce

Upon her looks.

DAVID. And hath this man, Uriah,  
A great affection for her?

AHIT. Rumour hath it  
He dotes on her: worships the very  
ground

She treads upon: cannot contain him-  
self

An hour out of her sight: follows her  
glance

Like a hungry wolf: is jealous without  
cause—

DAVID. In brief, her lover he?

[*King leaves the window.*]

AHIT. Assuredly,  
For is he not her husband?

DAVID. Friend, the window  
From which thou dost survey this vir-  
tuous world

Is surely very narrow!

AHIT. My Lord, there are  
Times when a narrow window doth  
promote

The happiness of all within the house.

DAVID. I shall remember that, Ahi-  
tophel.

It may well suit me that thy view  
should be

So closely shutter'd; for I had always  
thought

Thee—too observant, that *thy* window  
was

Thrown wide to all the broad faults  
of the world.

But, as to this same relative of thine,  
Canst bring her to me? for I am de-  
sirous

To put her beauty to the test. I have  
Been sad too long—disconsolate, I  
might say.

Perhaps this lady—

AHIT. Thy servant knows my lord  
Doth jest?

DAVID. Provoke me not, old fool, too  
far!

Is not the honour of a king worth  
more  
Than all the unveil'd Beauties of the  
world?

AHIT. With deep misgiving do I  
now obey.

DAVID. Hasten thou!

AHIT. (*aside, ironically*). A king's  
honour! A king's honour!  
[Exit.]

DAVID (*taking up the cup and return-  
ing to the window*).

What miracle of grace! what radiant  
beauty!

Would I had eyes a thousand to en-  
visage

The motions of her form! O blinding  
bliss,

Her vesture falling round her like soft  
clouds

Reveals a fleckless heaven! See now  
she turns,

Her bosom's broad expanse glows to  
the light,

And all her snowy, sinuous waist lies  
bare!

Her potency enthalls—I must possess,  
Possess her whilst this ruddy riot lasts  
And youth's mad fever burns along  
my veins.

(*Holding up cup*) Drown, Virtue,  
drown! Thou'rt but a jaded hag,  
I'll hug thy chains no more! Give me  
the wine of Love—

The love that comes like this in purple  
flashes!

Full of new life, and hope, and manly  
vigour,

Not cloy'd with dull satiety and custom,  
But burning, breathless, pulsing to its  
goal!

Yet soft! there is much need for cir-  
cumspexion—

But newly wed? I must walk warily  
To make possession sure. Some women  
are won

By swift assault, but most by under-  
mining—

The gradual encroachment day by day,  
Until the much-prized stronghold yields  
at last

To man's persistence—imperceptibly,  
The city captured e'er they know 'tis  
threaten'd!

If I can but subdue her to my will!

O wine of Love! I drink thee to the  
lees!

[*Drains cup.*]

Re-enter Ahitophel [*leading Bathshua  
closely veiled*].

DAVID. Leave us, good friend. Didst  
thou not hear me? leave us!

AHIT. Sire, thou dost compromise  
my daughter's honour.

DAVID. Thy granddaughter's!

AHIT. Be't so, my lord.

DAVID. Ah well,  
Ahitophel, we like not forc'd sweets.

The daughter of Eliam has a voice,  
And she shall answer thee. If 'tis her  
wish,

Reluctantly we shall release her. (*To  
Bath.*) Speak,

Thou hast none here to fear!

BATH. What the King wills,  
That would thine handmaid fain obey.

AHIT. Ah, child,  
Thou knowest not what a net thou  
draw'st about thee:

Consider well thine answer!

BATH: I have consider'd through  
long nights and days:

There is none like unto the King, none  
—none

Whatever hap may fall to me from  
him,

I shall endure it gladly.

DAVID. Art content?

AHIT. I needs must be.

DAVID. Then, if thou lov'st thy—  
daughter,

See that none come upon us unaware.  
Thy head shall answer for the slightest  
breath

Aspersing her fair fame.

[Exit Ahitophel.]

(*The King draws closer to Bathshua.*)

BATH. What would my lord?

DAVID. Why dost thou linger to un-  
veil the dawn?

[*As she unveils, the King starts back  
as though blinded by her beauty.*]

BATH. Love's dayspring—hath it pierced thee also?

DAVID. —Aye,  
The shaft of Fate hath sped: the view-  
less arrow  
Hath wing'd in silence, and hath found  
its mark.

Nothing will ever be the same again.  
I have look'd for thee through the  
years—through the long years:  
Thou didst delay thy coming, O my  
love!

And now at last our lips have spoken.  
What more

Is to be known?—save this (*taking her  
hand*)—save this, I love thee!

BATH. So fast, my lord, O King!  
And I—have I no voice?

Wait! what if I should be the wife  
of one

As brave and resolute as thou, perhaps  
As loving? Why! thou dost not even  
know

My name.

DAVID. Thy name! There is no  
single word

That could reveal thee! No range of  
words. For thou

Art faultless, and words fail us at the  
highest,

Being ever halt and lame interpreters.  
Thy name?—I'll put it to my heart and  
ask,

'Twixt kiss and kiss, what best becom-  
eth thee!

For, of the flowers, I would take coun-  
sel,—whether

The lily or the rose, the jasmine or  
The hyacinth breathes fragrance like  
to thine;

And, of the stars, those glistening or-  
acles,—

Whether the violet-tinted amethyst,  
Or the deep-gleaming, opalescent  
moon-stone,

Those dark eyes can outlustre; or, to  
bespeak

Thy heart of hearts,—whether the  
blood-red ruby

Hides passion in its depths deeper than  
thine.

Thy name! why wait for that? were we  
not named

Ere we were born? were we not born  
for this—

To meet, to thrill, to merge at last?

[*Strives to embrace her; she strug-  
gles faintly and then yields.*]

BATH. O David!  
How can I hold thee back? How any-  
thing

Deny thee? Like the rush of many  
waters

O'erwhelming all,—thine eyes, thy  
voice, constrain me;

The tide of love comes flooding in  
amain,

Filling each creek and crevice of my  
soul

With thee—my lord—my King! But  
thou—canst thou be true?

DAVID. Until this minute what should  
hold me true

Where that light-o'-love—a woman's  
luring smile

Beckon'd and drew? But now—

BATH. Yes, yes; but now?

DAVID. Now, my beloved, know I  
that true faith

Is far more beautiful than ranging love.  
Never, until this hour, have I believed

That love could last—outstay the kiss  
of passion.

Love for one only I have held to scorn!  
But now all things are changed,—my-  
self the most.

From the first moment that our glances  
met,

When first I saw thine eyes amid the  
crowd

Glint fire of recognition, soul to soul,  
I knew the hour of all my life had  
come!

For art thou not my own, my very own,  
Born mine from the beginning of all  
time?

My spiritual counterpart? my body's  
soul?

Art thou not that dear being for whom  
I have sigh'd

Through the long, listless and unleave-  
n'd years,

Mocking at love that came not? On  
my lips

Breathe—heart on homing heart—we  
two are one

For all the years that are past and are  
to come!

BATH. (*breaking away*). Thy mouth  
—thy mouth: it hath undone me!  
Nay!

I was undone long since in dreams of  
thee.

For when our spirits even at distance  
met

I knew my prince of men. But ever,  
*till this hour,*

Love shone and hallow'd all about thy  
path.

David! thou wert my first instructor.  
Thou

Didst teach me with thy poet soul to  
love

All that I love. Through thy brave  
eyes have I

Look'd out upon the world and found  
it fair.

And now thou wouldst fall off from thy  
great self,

And do this evil in the sight of God  
On this thine handmaid: for thou  
knowest well

No armour can foil love!

For him, my husband,—

That fiery Hittite who was thrust upon  
me,—

I care not. For myself what should  
I care,

Who love thee far beyond all fear of  
skaith?

But, for the soul of David,—Stay, oh  
stay!

Thou wilt think differently, my lord,  
to-morrow.

DAVID. To-morrow shall not come,  
and thou and I

Remain as we are now to one another!  
This hour is mine and thine! Irrevo-  
cable

This mingling of our lives.

BATH. (*sinking in his arms*). O Da-  
vid, David!

The stars are going out: I faint: I fail.  
[*The King supports her to an  
inner room.*]

*Re-enter Ahitophel.*

AHIT. (*turning over the cup*). To  
the dregs! So he hath ta'en the  
bait prepared.

Henceforth he is *my* servant: not *I*  
his.

Such power affordeth by-lanes of sweet  
pleasure:

My rich intent and aim to exercise it  
Upon my former master! But I must  
draw

The toils about him, or he may escape  
me.

Monarchs, like men, have ever a close  
device

Of finding scapegoats for their own  
misdeeds.

This must I now prevent! He must  
e'en answer

For his own sins, not *I* for him: so  
here's

To stir up trouble, on the crest of  
which

I ride—and higher mount this slippery  
shore!

[*Exit Ahitophel.*]

[*The stage is momentarily darkened,  
and then the dawn is seen slowly  
stealing into the apartment. As  
the light increases, David enters  
and seats himself in a recessed  
window. He appears dejected  
and absorbed in reverie.*]

*Enter Ahitophel.*

AHIT. My lord,

The palace is aroused and in high fer-  
ment.

As thou didst feast thine eyes on a  
dumb show,

Even so did others of this household  
spy

Upon a living one—thou wert o'er-  
look'd,

Even as thou thyself didst overlook:  
And now there's mischief i' the wind!

My daughter  
Did leave thy presence in full flood of  
tears,

And hath, despite her friends' remon-  
strances.

Refused' all fellowship. Such is the  
way of women:

They weep at that which they enjoy  
the most;

They love to chew the cud of their  
own thoughts

And ruminate in tears.

DAVID. Proceed more tersely,  
We want not the philosophy of love  
But facts—plain facts, Ahitophel!

AHIT. The tongue of slander,  
At all times lolling forth in the fresh  
air  
To taint the breeze with its envenom'd  
breath,  
Grown surfeited on such a rich repast,  
And dropping poison from its neigh-  
bouring fangs,  
Hath pierced the triple armour of thy  
throne  
And craves a victim.

[*Murmurs of disaffection heard  
without.*]

Hark, the serpent hisses!  
We must supply the thing with food or  
—perish.

DAVID. Go, perish then—thou and  
thy cowardice!

What care I for the rabble! Call out  
the guards!

But first—secure her safety: haste thee  
now!

Convey her by the subway to the pal-  
ace. [*Exit Ahitophel.*]

So soon upon my joy! comes it so  
soon!

The enchantment first, swift follows  
retribution;

The brief delight, at once the bitter  
pain;

The dream of bliss, and oh, the chill  
awakening!

For all the joys we aim at are but  
shadows,

Our destination to believe them real!  
And what have I here gain'd? say,

rather, lost?

For the spirit's loss outweighs the  
body's gain,

Shaking the tender scales of love and  
honour

With clangorous overpoise.  
[*Uproar without.*]

So this then is  
The flaming gauge and penalty of  
Greatness!

One step beyond the boundaries of pru-  
dence,—

And who that ever loved was worldly-  
prudent?—

And the whole hell-swarm follows fast  
upon me,

As thick as wolves and ravening for  
their prey.

Fell hypocrites! craven slaves of secret  
vice!

I'll hold a mirror to their own dark  
souls.

Not one o' them but had done as I  
have done,

Given the all-hallow'd opportunity!  
For who of men is free from this same

lure,  
The languor and the grace of woman-  
kind?

A glance, a smile—their doom's al-  
ready spun!

*Re-enter Ahitophel.*

AHIT. My lord, the guards scarce  
hold their own. The people  
Swarm in with rage: we must devise  
some means

To quiet them. (*Aside.*) It works al-  
most too well.

DAVID. Hast thou secured her?

AHIT. She is upon her way.  
Thy body-guard will answer for her  
safety.

DAVID. Until I hear her footfall in  
the palace,

Talk not to me of safety! Let them  
rave!

Fulfill thy mission, and that speedily,  
Or, God! I'll fling thy corpse out to the

mob!

'Tis thou shalt quiet them!

AHIT. (*aside*). I have him in the  
toils!

[*Exit Ahitophel.*]

DAVID. The dog! 'Tis a slant eye:  
I like it not.

But treachery will out, and so wilt  
thou,

My crafty councillor, when time per-  
mits.

Such secrets tarry safer under ground.  
I'll have no witness to my guilt; I'll

not

Enact that folly!

*Re-enter Ahitophel.*

AHIT. My lord, she is without  
And but awaits thy pleasure.



DAVID.

Ah, at last!

[*Ahitophel ushers in Bathshua: the King meets her and takes her by both hands.*]

Now I can breathe! Whilst thou, my Soul, wert threaten'd,  
A torturing terror held me. Now am I free,  
To think, to act—to act, to greatly dare,  
To venture all, if needs be, for thy sake!  
Now let them thunder! (*To Ahit.*)  
Hast thou then conceived  
A plan, my subtle friend, that shall convince  
The unruly mob of our wrong'd innocence?

AHIT. The proof of innocence?  
Why, surely,—if  
The proof weren't damning! But,  
lacking that, speed thou  
The remedy.

DAVID. What remedy avails us?

AHIT. Thou hast but one: 'tis set forth here.

[*Hands him scroll.*]

DAVID (*reading aloud*). To Joab, captain of the king's forces before Rabbah: "*Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.*"

So thou  
Wouldst remedy one ill, by setting up  
Another?

AHIT. The most usual course—in nature.

DAVID. The worser evil counteract the lesser?

AHIT. Say rather,  
The lesser evil counteract the greater:  
It surely were a less calamity  
That one should perish, than that this  
whole realm  
Should be subvert with mutiny?

DAVID. Convincing  
To minds like thine. They dare not  
strike at me!

[*A noise as of crashing timber: the porch of the palace is wrecked. Some of the guard are driven in, but recover themselves.*]

AHIT. (*pointing to debris*). The proof of what I speak! My lord remembers

The law of Moses, and the death that stones

Those taken in adultery? Her blood  
Will soon besplash thy palace walls,  
unless—

BATH. Think not of me, my lord!  
my life is thine;

I do not fear—death—if at thy dear hands.

My body then would satisfy these wolves.

I have loved . . . I have lived . . . It is enough!

DAVID. No, not to die—to live! to live and love,  
And grow more fond with every fleeting hour.

New vistas of delight are opening up  
Through these same lurid and portentous skies—

(*Pointing skyward.*) See, see the blue—  
—how it expands for us!

There, somewhere, shall we reach our  
isle of bliss,

And sun our souls by the violet-tinted sea.

To die! why, child, we have but begun  
to live!

To live—and oh, the difference in living!

AHIT. My lord, my lord, this is no  
time for love!

DAVID. What then, old gray-beard,  
fear'st thou for thy skin?

All times are happy, if we count them  
so;

And death is nothing when the heart  
is light,

A broken sunbeam—that is all!  
(*To Bathshua.*) Fear not.

I shall o'ercome them.

AHIT. Thou must take action then,  
Or let the occasion slip.

DAVID (*indicating scroll*). How will  
that serve us?

AHIT. In this way. I will publish  
far and wide

A grave reverse hath fallen upon our  
arms

In front of Rabbah, and that Uriah is  
Foremost among the slain.



DAVID. They'll not believe it:  
No messenger hath yet approach'd the  
city.

AHIT. My lord, one came this morn-  
ing: him have I  
Held up, with all his news unpromul-  
gate.

DAVID. That messenger hath a  
tongue!

AHIT. Fear not thou *that*.  
Him also I'll curtail of living speech  
After he hath fulfill'd our—

DAVID. Thou art a devil,  
Ahitophel,—a very prince of devils!

AHIT. My lord is a good judge—of  
devils. (*Presenting scroll.*) Will  
My lord sign?

BATH. (*taking scroll*). Not his life!  
Ah, no—not that!

DAVID (*seizing her by the wrists and  
looking into her eyes*). He  
stands between us! There is no  
other way.

[*Uncclasps her fingers and takes  
scroll from her; she gazes wildly  
about her and then falls.*]

Seven years elapse between Acts  
IV. and V.

### ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Jerusalem: Hall of Audience  
in King David's Palace. Hour,  
twilight. Bathshua lulling her  
little son to sleep.*

BATH. (*singing*).  
Darkness steals o'er hill and valley,  
In the heavens one pale star shines,  
Whilst the nightjar's murmurous music  
Breathes the magic of the pines.  
Sleep: sleep: in happy slumbers blest,  
For Silence broods upon a world at  
rest.

*Enter King David.*

DAVID (*anxiously*). My little son—?

BATH. Sssh! Thou must not awake  
him.

He hath been somewhat petulant of  
late,

And will not sleep unless I hush him  
off.

To-night he pleaded to sit up with me  
And see the stars come through, but  
this warm eve

Hath worn him out. He is a little poet,  
Just pushing forth small tender buds  
of knowledge.

Some day thou wilt be proud of him.

DAVID. Proud of him!  
I am proud of him! Never was a fa-  
ther

Prouder or fonder of his son than I.

I tell thee, wife, he is so dear to me  
That if it should please God to take  
him from us—

BATH. Fond heart, why speak'st  
thou so alarmingly?

He is firm and well-knit for his years—  
why then

Should'st thou be anxious?

DAVID. Ah, why indeed? Are we  
Not always anxious about those we  
love?

By these God hath the power to  
scourge us most.

No child hath ever nestled to my heart  
Like this one. With what soul-ensnar-  
ing mirth

He doth reciprocate my love for him!  
And is he not *our* son—our first-born?

BATH. He is  
The dearest pledge that ever yet was  
given  
In love.

DAVID (*offering to lift the child*).  
Shall I?

BATH. Nay: let him now sleep on.  
I am fain to keep you by my side  
awhile,

Here in the mystic twilight, hand in  
hand.

DAVID. Yea, hand in hand, unto eter-  
nity.

Beloved, thou only know'st what I have  
suffer'd,

What we together suffer'd . . . and must  
suffer!

While in this drear abyss we darkling  
grope

Remote from Him, our Father and our  
God.

For seven long years I have not heard  
 His Voice,  
 Neither in the deep quiet of the noon-  
 tide,  
 Nor 'mid the starry stillness of the  
 night,—  
 As when the North Wind, stealing  
 through my chamber,  
 Did winnow with soft wings my slum-  
 bering harp,  
 And woke the silent strings to tremu-  
 lous life.  
 Often it bore me to the fields of sleep,  
 To the murmur of wind-music; oft in  
 vigils  
 It spoke to my rapt soul of God, and  
 the night  
 Was hallow'd, and the day came all too  
 soon.

[*David rises.*]

Those ministering voices are all past,  
 I am as one given over to the dead,  
 A spirit restless in a land of shadows.  
 O Bathshua! Is my sin beyond re-  
 demption?  
 Heeds He no more? Ah, no: I'll not  
 believe it!  
 For He whom I have worship'd and  
 revered  
 Is above all a just and jealous God,—  
 Of mercy infinite, and of love so vast  
 That all our boundaries of love must  
 stretch and break  
 Ere we can prove its fulness. Only in  
 death  
 Shall we first know the power of such  
 a love,  
 And comprehend the measure of His  
 grace.  
 O voice of God, speaking within and  
 around me,  
 Only to know Thou speakest is enough!  
 Speak! speak! thy servant listeneth, O  
 Lord.

BATH. O husband mine, be patient!  
 and His mercy  
 Will of a surety find thee.—Never yet  
 Did He deny the contrite heart and  
 pure.

DAVID. Nay, love, it were in vain:  
 I have not paid  
 The penalty of sin. Blood-guiltiness  
 Is on my soul, and He will not re-  
 deem it.

Unless—ah, no, I dare not think of  
 that!

BATH. Of what?

DAVID. Too well I know my punish-  
 ment.

Dwells it not here? Lives it not aye  
 before me?

"A life for a life"—'tis thy life or the  
 child's:

My son, my little son, or—thee, my  
 Queen!

I can at least cheat God of that de-  
 spair;

For in that moment when thou diest,  
 I die.

BATH. My life is of less value than  
 the child's.

Thou canst get other wives—more lov-  
 able,

More fair; but not another son like  
 this.

DAVID. Thy life determines my life,  
 thy death my death:

But I would die before thee, for thou  
 dost

Not love as I love thee!

BATH. O faint of heart,  
 Dost think I do not love thee unto  
 death?—

What were the world to me without thy  
 love?

But thou—thou judgest God, even be-  
 fore

He hath judged thee.

DAVID. He hath already judged me—  
 His silence is my judgment, Bathshua!  
 Each lifting prayer falls still-born  
 from my lips.

He, He alone, knows my exceeding  
 need!

Leave us awhile; seek yet I will his  
 mercy—

For the child, for thee, but most for  
 my far sin.

If He may lift that burden from my  
 soul. [*Bathshua withdraws.*]

[*David kneels at the couch and of-  
 fers the following prayer*]:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, ac-  
 cording  
 To Thy loving kindness:

"Hide Thy face from my sins,

*And blot out all mine iniquities.*

*"For I acknowledge my transgression*

*And my sin is ever before me.*

*"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned*

*And done this evil in Thy sight.*

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a right spirit within me.*

*"Cast me not away from Thy presence;*

*And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me!"*

SCENE II.—*The Same.*

*King David, sitting in judgment. Bathshua seated on his left, her right hand resting on the shoulder of her little son. Lords and counsellors in attendance. A prisoner is brought forward, bound hand and foot, and thrown upon his knees before the King.*

DAVID. What accusation overshadows him?

AHIT. He hath conspired against your throne and person.

DAVID. The evidence?

AHIT. The testimony of The woman at his side, supported by Most damning, gross particulars. The knave

Nothing denies, but a sullen silence keeps.

DAVID (*to prisoner*). Knowst thou the serious nature of the charge That is preferred against thee?

PRIS. I do, my lord.

DAVID. And that, if proven, the penalty is death?

PRIS. I am content—to die.

DAVID. Hast thou then naught To urge in thy defence?

PRIS. Nothing, my lord.

DAVID (*aside*). And yet, methinks, he looks not like a traitor.

(*To the Prince*) Dost think that man would take thy father's life?

[*The little prince steps down from the throne, and looks the prisoner with childlike frankness in the face.*]

PRINCE. He is a good man, father: I am sure

That he is good. And are you—a good woman?

WOMAN. Child, what a foolish question! Of course I am:

Why shouldst thou think I am not?

PRINCE. I don't like you.

WOMAN. A child's whim, this! And who made thee my judge?

DAVID. No one hath judged thee—unless it be thyself.

But we are very much of the same mind

As our small son. (*To officer.*) Release him.

[*Prisoner is unbound.*]

Now wilt tell us

Why thou refusedst to defend thyself?

PRIS. My Lord, must I incriminate my wife?

DAVID. Thou art here to speak the truth.

PRIS. Then truth is this: All subterfuge, all falseness, all deceit Have but one mask—the white face of a woman.

She'd have me dead so she espouse her lover.

Here is her script.

DAVID (*after reading*). But why hast thou withheld it?

PRIS. The bitter knowledge of her treachery Struck deeper far than death. Ah! death to that

Were but a blessed boon, a swift release.

Why then should I defend myself? . . . But now

The little prince, thy son, hath won my heart.

God bless him—bless him! for his frank blue eyes

Have probed my wound, and drawn its venom off.

No traitor, I!

DAVID. Thou needest not avouch it.  
And, since we know not 'mid the stress  
of life

When we may need such loyalty, be  
thou

The keeper and custodian of our son.

PRINCE. I am so glad! I am so  
glad!

DAVID. For thee,  
Thou thing enswath'd in the soft flesh  
of woman,

Thy darken'd soul shall prey upon  
itself.

Take her, and shut her from the light  
of day.

[Exit guard with woman.]

[David rises as though to rescind  
the order, then sinks back hope-  
lessly.]

DAVID (aside). Can I so glibly sen-  
tence her? Myself,

Seven years this very day, for such a  
cause,

Struck down Uriah with the sword of  
Ammon.

*Enter Attendant.*

ATT. My Lord, the prophet Nathan  
is without,  
And begs an audience.

DAVID. Then bid him enter.

*Enter Nathan.*

DAVID. Seer of the living God, up-  
rise! thy message?

NATH. My lord, O King!  
I ask for judgment. It hath ever been  
The privilege and custom of our Col-  
lege,

Whose humble messenger I am this  
day,

To bring to the knowledge of our lord  
the King

Cases of grievous wrong, that his re-  
proof

May echo through the land, and be a  
warning

To evildoers. The facts I shall relate,  
Grave as they did appear unto my  
Order,

Immured in lives of holy meditation,

Will strike, I doubt not, a responsive  
chord

Of horror and of noble indignation  
In the exalted heart of our lord the

King,

And set for a mark and seal upon all  
time

His justice and his judgment.

DAVID. Nathan, speak on.

NATH. Two men there were, dwell-  
ing in thy chief city—

One rich, the other poor. And the rich  
man had

Of flocks and herds, of wine, and oil,  
and treasure,

Exceeding great abundance: but the  
poor man

Had little substance he might call his  
own,

Save one ewe lamb that he had bought  
and cherish'd,

That ate from his own hand, and drank  
from his own cup,

And that was dear to him even as a  
daughter.

Now as it chanced there came a trav-  
eler

To him that had such plenitude of  
riches,

And begg'd of him a stranger's enter-  
tainment.

But he who had been bless'd with such  
increase

Did spare to take of his own flock;  
but seized

And slew, in utter wantonness of heart,  
The poor man's one ewe lamb, and set  
it dress'd

Before the wayfarer.

DAVID (rising in indignation). *The  
man who hath done  
This thing shall surely die.*

NATHAN (pointing at David). *Thou  
art the man!*

[The King falls back upon his seat,  
crushed; his left hand supporting  
his head, his right clutching at  
the arm of the throne; and he  
remains in this attitude, while  
Nathan pronounces sentence.]

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I  
anointed thee king over Israel,  
and I delivered thee out of the  
hand of Saul;

"And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

"Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

"Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour.

"For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

DAVID. *I have sinn'd against the Lord.*

NATHAN. *And the Lord also Hath put away thy sin; for He hath heard*

*Thy voice of supplication and He knoweth*

*The sorrow and contrition of thy heart. The soul that doth repent, the same shall live.*

*But, forasmuch as thou hast given occasion*

*For seekers after wrong to blaspheme God,*

*The child that hath been born to thee in sin—*

*The tender fruit of thine adulterous commerce*

*(pointing at the prince)—*

*He shall most surely die.*

*[Bathshua puts her hands silently into those of the King. As he realizes the full force of the blow, the King's head falls on his breast.]*

DAVID *(in a broken voice)*. It is enough:

My cup is full.

PRINCE *(seeking the King's face)*.

Father! Why should I die?

SCENE III.—*A Room in the Palace.*

*The little prince laid out for burial.*

*Bathshua alone beside the body.*

BATH. My son—my little son—my little son—

Can God so keep thee from me?

*Enter David (with the signs of mourning upon him.)*

DAVID. The child is dead: Come, put away thy grief, for it is barren.

Whilst he yet lived; our prayers might still avail him;

But now he hath pass'd beyond the bourn of tears

Where sorrow is not, but Divine Compassion

Leans earthward to annul our loss. Look up,

Answer his smiles with smiles; for he awaits

The day, the hour, when we shall go to him:

Serene he waits—serenely let us bear This transient separation.

BATH. My loss is new. O leave me with my grief—in pity leave me!

DAVID. How frail thy heart of trust! Bethink thee, wife,

Thou canst not add one comfort to his rest.

He is at peace. There all is well with him.

BATH. Let me but look on him a little longer, His face so fair!

DAVID. Think of him as he was! Now that the spirit hath fled, it is but clay

Thou worshippest.

BATH. It is all that remains To us—all save a memory! And soon This dear, cold body will have pass'd from sight.



DAVID. 'Tis better so, for thou wilt  
grieve the less.

[*Tries to draw her away.*]

BATH. Never! not while these eyes  
may treasure him,  
These hands yet tend him, and these  
ears await  
His little kingly voice, his princely  
bidding;  
For see he sleeps, he sleeps so peace-  
fully!  
Almost could I believe that still he  
breathes,  
So surely doth the blanchéd coverlet  
heave!  
It cannot be that death hath part in  
him,  
Else death than life were lovelier!—  
O my child!  
Mine in these moments, more than ever  
mine!  
Too soon the grave will hide thee!—  
Spare me, my lord,  
I am a woman and a mother—

DAVID. True:  
Thou art a woman, and canst find re-  
lief  
In tears—men find them unavailing.  
Weep on:  
Somewhere, unseen, thy child is gather-  
ing up  
The priceless, precious jewels that are  
falling,  
Like star on star in the ocean, and his  
eyes  
Are moist with unshed tears, 'as the  
Angels' are.  
O never doubt but that the day will  
come  
When thou wilt look on this heart-  
searching sorrow  
But as a landmark in God's love for  
thee!

BATH. Thy heart, my King, is per-  
fect. Would I had  
But a tithe of thy great faith! for then  
I might  
Uplift the front and forehead of my  
grief,  
Strive to forget, and build life up anew.  
I can but walk i' the ways that I have  
known,  
The tear-stain'd ways of weak and lov-  
ing women.

DAVID. This little body that was ten-  
anted

With love for us, God did reclaim  
from us:

He gave that we might feel our loss—  
the greatest

Sin-sacrifice demanded yet of any.

Let us not murmur that this dread  
atonement

Is wrung from our full hearts. But  
Love remains,

Enrich'd and hallow'd by this poignant  
loss,

It will uphold us now that he has gone.  
And when this stormy grief hath spent  
itself,

And thou canst look through these same  
winnowing cloudrifts

To the clear and shining spaces of the  
sky,

Come, place thy gentle hands in mine—  
we two

Will yet fare forth together, closelier  
knit

Because of this deep sacrament of love.

[*Kisses the forehead of the dead  
child and withdraws.*]

#### BATHSHUA'S PRAYER.

Father of Life, of light, of love,  
In Whose vast arms the world en-  
dures,  
Pour down Thy blessing from above—  
The peace that Faith alone secures.

O let the waters flow again!  
The fountain of my grief upspring;  
For all life's sands are parch'd with  
pain,  
And desolate the heart I bring.

Remove, O Lord, the sense of guilt,  
The bitter memories amass'd!  
Thou canst give sevenfold, if Thou  
wilt,  
The treasure that seem'd unsur-  
pass'd.

But of all treasures—this the most,  
O keep me first in David's heart!  
For without him my life is lost;  
Let not his joy in me depart!

And with his love, dear God, restore  
 The spirit that hath left this clay,  
 Into another vessel pour  
 The life, the light, that was our day!

*Enter Nathan.*

NATH. Comfort thee, Bathshua!  
 God's peace be with thee!  
 The Lord hath heard thy prayer, and  
 hath vouchsafed  
 A son—in likeness of thy treasure  
 here;  
 And he shall be belovéd of the Lord,  
 The hope and joy of thy declining  
 years.  
 And thou shalt name him "Solomon,"  
 because  
 The peace which was withholden in our  
 day  
 Shall last throughout his reign. To him  
 'tis given  
 To build a temple to the Lord Most  
 High—  
 That tabernacle which King David  
 plann'd,  
 But unto whom it is inhibited  
 Even to lay one stone upon another:  
 Not for his grievous sin, which God  
 hath put away,  
 But for the innocent blood that he hath  
 shed.  
 Yet, so high-minded is our lord the  
 king,  
 He will complete this trial of his faith  
 Greater in soul—for he shall live to  
 strengthen  
 The hands and heart of his more hon-  
 our'd son,  
 And see in vision that vast fane up-  
 rise.—  
 To David the conception and design,  
 To Solomon the honour and the glory!  
 And now, O Queen, thou hast been  
 blest as wife,  
 Yea, still more blesséd shalt thou be  
 as mother,—  
 Through thee shall spring a line of  
 mighty kings,  
 Yet mightiest He that is the lowliest  
 born!  
 What solace and support thy heart can  
 give,  
 Thy husband will have need of; for 'tis  
 written

King David's reign shall set in clouds  
 and gloom.

[*Exit Nathan.*]

BATH. It is the voice of the Lord!  
 His will be done!

*Re-enter David, having put off the signs  
 of mourning.*

BATH. David, my lord, my king! my  
 rock of refuge!  
 In shelter of you the winds of grief  
 are laid,  
 And gentle peace closes the watch of  
 sorrow.  
 Wondrous and deep as was my love  
 for him,  
 It is no measure of my love for you;  
 For he was but a tender rivulet,  
 You are the fount from which the  
 blessing sprang.  
 Lavish once more your wealth of love  
 upon me!  
 And let the whisper of another life  
 Make music through the channels of my  
 heart:  
 For God hath here vouchsafed to me  
 a son,  
 And in that son shall David's line con-  
 tinue.

DAVID. Hath Nathan visited thee?

BATH. He hath, dear lord.  
 And this sad heart doth sing aloud for  
 joy,  
 For God—our God—hath wholly us for-  
 given.

DAVID. He hath heard thy suppli-  
 cation, O my soul!  
 The years of travail draw now to an  
 end.  
 And thou, O Queenly heart!  
 Lovingly leal through that long, dread  
 atonement,  
 Be thou partaker and consort of my  
 joy—  
 This blessed joy, ensanctified by sor-  
 row,  
 Of our complete reunion under God.  
 His hands shall guide us, and His peace  
 enfold us,  
 Until we know Him as He truly is.

[*Curtain.*]

CHARLES WILLIAM CAYZER (1902).

HADAD



## HADAD

[SCENE.—*The terraced room of AB-SALOM'S house, by night; adorned with vases of flowers, and fragrant shrubs; an awning spread over part of it.*  
TAMAR and HADAD.]

TAM. No, no, I will remember—  
proofs, you said,  
Unknown to Moses.

HAD. Well, my love, thou knowest  
I've been a traveller in various climes;  
Trode Ethiopia's scorching sands, and  
scaled  
The snow-clad mountains; trusted to  
the deep;  
Traversed the fragrant islands of the  
sea,  
And with the Wise conversed of many  
nations.

TAM. I know thou hast.

HAD. Of all mine eyes have seen,  
The greatest, wisest, and most wonder-  
ful,  
Is that dread sage, the Ancient of the  
Mountain.

TAM. Who?

HAD. None knows his lineage, age,  
or name; his locks  
Are like the snows of Caucasus; his  
eyes  
Beam with the wisdom of collected  
ages.  
In green, unbroken years, he sees, 't is  
said,  
The generations pass, like autumn  
fruits,  
Garnered, consumed, and springing  
fresh to life,  
Again to perish, while he views the sun,  
The seasons roll, in rapt serenity,  
And high communion with celestial  
powers.

Some say 't is Shem, our father, some  
say Enoch,  
And some Melchizedek.

TAM. I've heard a tale  
Like this, but ne'er believed it.

HAD. I have proved it.—  
Through perils dire, dangers most im-  
minent,  
Seven days and nights 'midst rocks and  
wildernesses,  
And boreal snows, and never-thawing  
ice,  
Where not a bird, a beast, a living  
thing,  
Save the far-soaring vulture comes, I  
dared  
My desperate way, resolved to know, or  
perish.

TAM. Rash, rash adventurer!

HAD. On the highest peak  
Of stormy Caucasus, there blooms a  
spot  
On which perpetual sunbeams play,  
where flowers  
And verdure never die; and there he  
dwells.

TAM. But didst thou see him?

HAD. Never did I view  
Such awful majesty: his reverend locks  
Hung like a silver mantle to his feet,  
His raiment glistened saintly white, his  
brow  
Rose like the gate of Paradise, his  
mouth  
Was musical as its bright guardian's  
songs.

TAM. What did he tell thee? Oh!  
what wisdom fell  
From lips so hallowed?

HAD. Whether he possess  
The Tetragrammaton,—the powerful  
Name



Inscribed on Moses' rod, by which he wrought

Unheard-of wonders, which constrains the Heavens

To part with blessings, shakes the earth, and rules

The strongest Spirits; or if God hath given

A delegated power, I cannot tell

But 't was from him I learned their fate, their fall,

Who, erewhile, wore resplendent crowns in Heaven;

Now, scattered through the earth, the air, the sea.

Them he compels to answer, and from them

Has drawn what Moses, nor no mortal ear,

Has ever heard.

TAM. But did he tell it thee?

HAD. He told me much,—more than I dare reveal;

For with a deadful oath he sealed my lips.

TAM. But canst thou tell me nothing?

—Why unfold

So much, if I must hear no more?

HAD. You bade  
Explain my words, almost reproached me, sweet,

For what by accident escaped me.

TAM. Ah!  
A little—something tell me,—sure, not all

Were words inhibited.

HAD. Then, promise never,  
Never to utter of this conference  
A breath to mortal.

TAM. Solemnly, I vow.

HAD. Even then, 't is little I can say, compared  
With all the marvels he related.

TAM. I'm breathless.—Tell me how they sinn'd. Come, how fell.

HAD. Their Prince involved them in his ruin.

TAM. What black offence on his devoted head  
Drew such dire punishment?

HAD. The wish to be  
As the All-Perfect.

TAM. Arrogating that  
Peculiar to his Maker!—awful crime!  
But what their doom? their place of punishment?

HAD. Above, about, beneath; earth, sea, and air;  
Their habitations various as their minds,  
Employments, and desires.

TAM. But are they round us, Hadad?  
—not confined  
In penal chains and darkness?

HAD. So he said;  
And so your holy books infer. What saith  
Your Prophet? what the Prince of Uz?  
TAM. I shudder,  
Lest some dark Minister be near us now.

HAD. You wrong them. They are bright Intelligences,  
Robbed of some native splendor, and cast down,  
'Tis true, from Heaven; but not deformed, and foul,  
Revengeful, malice-working Fiends, as fools  
Suppose. They dwell, like Princes, in the clouds;  
Sun their bright pinions in the middle sky;  
Or arch their palaces beneath the hills,  
With stones inestimable studded so.  
That sun or stars were useless there.

TAM. Good heavens!

HAD. He bade me look on rugged  
Caucasus,  
Crag piled on crag beyond the utmost ken  
Naked, and wild, as if creation's ruins  
Were heaped in one immeasurable chain  
Of barren mountains, beaten by the storms  
Of everlasting winter. But within  
Are glorious palaces, and domes of light,  
Irradiate halls, and crystal colonnades,  
Blazing with lustre past the noontide beam,

Or, with a milder beauty, mimicking  
The mystic signs of changeful Maz-  
zaroth.

TAM. Unheard of wonders!

HAD. There they dwell, and muse,  
And wander; beings beautiful, immor-  
tal,  
Minds vast as heaven, capacious as the  
sky;  
Whose thoughts connect past, present,  
and to come,  
And glow with light intense, imperish-  
able.  
So in the sparry chambers of the Sea  
And Air-Pavilions, upper Tabernacles,  
They study Nature's secrets, and enjoy  
No poor dominion.

TAM. Are they beautiful,  
And powerful far beyond the human  
race?

HAD. Man's feeble heart cannot con-  
ceive it. When  
The Sage described them, fiery elo-  
quence  
Broke from his lips, his bosom heaved,  
his eyes  
Grew bright and mystical; moved by  
the theme,  
Like one who feels a deity within.

TAM. Wondrous!—What intercourse  
have they with men?

HAD. Sometimes they deign to inter-  
mix with man  
But oft with woman.

TAM. Ha! with woman?

HAD. She  
Attracts them with her gentler virtues,  
soft,  
And beautiful, and heavenly, like them-  
selves.  
They have been known to love her with  
a passion  
Stronger than human.

TAM. That surpasses all  
You yet have told me.

HAD. This the sage affirms;  
And Moses, darkly.

TAM. How do they appear?—  
How love?—

HAD. Sometimes 't is spiritual, signi-  
fied  
By beatific dreams, or more distinct  
And glorious apparation.—They *have*  
stooped  
To animate a human form, and love  
Like mortals.

TAM. Frightful to be so beloved!—  
Frightful! who could endure the horrid  
thought?

HAD. (*After a pause.*) But why con-  
demn  
A spirit's love? so high,  
So glorious, if he haply deigned?—

TAM. Forswear  
My Maker! love a Demon!

HAD. No—Oh, no,—  
My thoughts but wandered—Oft, alas!  
they wander.

TAM. Why dost thou speak so sadly  
now?—And lo!  
Thine eyes are fixed again upon Arc-  
turus.  
Thus ever, when thy drooping spirits  
ebb,  
Thou gazest on that star. Hath it the  
power  
To cause or cure thy melancholy  
mood?—

(*He appears lost in thought.*)  
Tell me,—ascrib'st thou influence to the  
stars?

HAD. (*Starting.*) The stars!—What  
know'st thou of the stars?

TAM. I know that they were made to  
rule the night.

HAD. Like palace lamps! Thou echo-  
est well thy grandsire!—  
Woman! The stars are living, glorious,  
Amazing, infinite!

TAM. Speak not so wildly.  
I know them numberless, resplendent,  
set  
As symbols of the countless, countless  
years  
That make eternity.

HAD. Thou speak'st the word—  
O, had ye proved—like those Great  
Sufferers,—

Shot, once for all, the gulf,—felt myriad ages  
 Only the prelude,—could ye scan the void  
 With eyes as searching as its torments,—  
 Then—then—mightst thou pronounce it feelingly!

TAM. What ails thee, Hadad?—Draw me not so close.

HAD. Tamar! I need thy love—more than thy love—

TAM. Thy cheek is wet with tears—  
 Nay, let us part—  
 'T is late. I cannot, must not linger.—  
*(Breaks from him, and exit.)*

HAD. Loved and abhorred!—Still, still accursed!—

*[He paces, twice or thrice, up and down with passionate gestures; then turns his face to the sky, and stands a moment in silence.]*

O! where,  
 In the illimitable space, in what  
 Profound of untried misery, when all  
 His words, his rolling orbs of light,  
 that fill  
 With life and beauty yonder infinite,  
 Their radiant journey run, forever set,  
 Where, where, in what abyss shall I be  
 groaning? *(Exit).*

JAMES ABRAHAM HILLHOUSE  
 (1789-1841).

# ELIJAH





## ELIJAH

### THE ARGUMENT.

ZEPHON, one of the Sons of the Prophets, to whom the caves of Mount Carmel afforded a refuge from the persecutions of Queen Jezebel, is joined upon the top of the mountain by Obadiah, King Ahab's pious steward, or more properly, major-domo, who narrates to him Elijah's challenge to the priests of Baal to meet him upon that spot for a solemn trial or ordeal by fire.

The procession enters. Chorus of Virgins of the Sun. The heralds announce the object of the convocation. While the altar is being constructed and other preparations made, the king proposes an argument between Elijah the prophet, and Amaziah, the priest of Baal, to which the latter reluctantly submits. Amaziah descants on the antiquity of the worship of the Sun, and its time-honored traditions. Elijah goes back to the birth of time and the creation of the sun by Jehovah. He alludes to his obeying the command of Joshua. He answers objections from the destruction of the Canaanitish nations. Hiel, the Bethelite, an infidel, explains the myth of Adonis by the sun's return from winter to spring. Queen Jezebel interposes, extolling Sidon and other heathen capitals, for their improvement in taste, the arts, commerce, architecture, and the products of the loom, contrasted with the rudeness of the Hebrews. Elijah shows the superior value of truth and virtue. Maachah, the king's mother, upbraids the prophet with his severity. Ithobal, priest of the grove, the queen's chaplain, advises him to leave the vicinity of the court, and repair to the more congenial atmosphere of Judah. The prophet protests his willingness to en-

dure martyrdom for his religion. The king abruptly closes the debate.

Chorus of priests of the Sun. In proportion as the day wears away without any answer by fire, their behavior grows frantic. Elijah taunts them with bitter irony. They become incensed, and Amaziah charges his presence as the obstacle to their success. He insists that the offended deity can be propitiated only by a human sacrifice, and demands the surrender of Elijah for the purpose. A great tumult ensues. Ahab protects him, and orders that the prophet offer sacrifice in his turn.

Elijah builds an altar, and drenches it with water. He prays. Fire descends from heaven, and consumes the sacrifice. The people, affected by the miracle, applaud, and vow their homage to Jehovah.

Elijah orders the slaying of the priests of Baal at the river Kishon.

The poem concludes with a grand chorus of the sons of the prophets.

### THE PERSONS.

ELIJAH, The Tishbite, the Hebrew prophet.

ZEPHON, one of the sons of the prophets.

OBADIAH, King Ahab's steward, or governor of his house.

AHAB, king of Israel.

HIEL, the Bethelite.

AMAZIAH, priest of Baal or the Sun.

ITHOBAL, priest of the Grove.

MELZAR, chief astrologer.

ZABDIEL, a Hebrew.

HEZRON, a Hebrew.

MARSHAL and assistants.

JEZEBEL, queen of Israel.

MAACHAH, mother of Ahab.

CHORUS of priests of Baal or the Sun.

CHORUS of Virgins of the Sun.

CHORUS of the Sons of the Prophets.

HEBREWS, SIDONIANS, &c.

The *Scene* is the summit of Mount Carmel, looking to the sea. The *Time*, from morning till evening.

ZEPHON, *alone*.

SOFTLY the sunrise stealeth o'er the sea,  
The many twinkling, many sounding sea.  
Its earliest kiss the snows of Hermon  
caught,

Suffused with virgin blushes; down it  
leaped

From peak to sparkling peak, with frolic  
haste,

O'er gloomy gorges and o'er rough  
ravines,

O'er dewy tamarisk slopes and broomy  
vales,

O'er pastoral plains, and dream-em-  
bosomed lakes,

Flooding with equal glory town and  
tower.

The shadow of the headland, that had  
stretched

Its giant bulk athwart the ample bay,  
Shrinks back affrighted to the moun-  
tain's foot;

While o'er his level floor glad Ocean  
lays

A regal pathway, paved with flakes of  
gold.

Swift to the west the laughing Splendor  
flies,

To pash out the weak moon and pallid  
stars,

And strip the purple from discrowned  
Night.

So spreads a smile from Childhood's  
happy lips,

Beams in the eye, and dimples in the  
cheek,

Till every feature shows the genial joy.

No cloud doth fleck the sky, nor ruf-  
fling breeze

Winnoweth wantonly the delicate spray.

The lazy shallops in the roadstead doze,

With blistered decks, and canvas idly  
furled.

The white-laced surf runs creaming up  
the beach,

Toying around the fisher's naked feet.

The solid sea, smooth to th' horizon's  
rim,

Seems a broad shield of gray and bur-  
nished steel,

Whereon Day's champion, rioting in  
strength,

His crest new trimmed, ablaze with  
hornéd light.

Incessant flings a sheaf of golden darts,  
Shivered as soon, and in a glittering  
shower

Resilient, as of topaz freshly broke.

Thou changeful, changeless Sea! all  
placid now,

As Infancy lulled by its cradle-hymn;  
But late we saw thy swirling billows  
huge,

Lush-green and foam-capt, madly chase  
along,

And bold the swimmer that would tempt  
thy spleen.

So sleeps the tiger, with retracted claw,  
And sleek and shining skin. A breath  
provokes,

Capricious termagant! thy meekness  
feigned.

Thou battlest with the tempest at its  
top,

And hurl'st defiance to the thunder-  
cloud.

Down goes the bark that trusted to thy  
smile,

With all on board, strewing the ocean-  
floor

With ingots, jewels, silks of gorgeous  
Ind,

And costlier treasures earth were poor  
to buy.

Thou roll'st remorseless, heedless of the  
hopes

Thy frenzy wrecked. Perfidious, beaute-  
ous Sea!

We dote like lovers on thy fickle face,  
Morn, noon, and fresh'ning eve, intent

to spy,

But chief at glint of day, or rising moon,  
New phases and aspects of loveliness.

The dreamy moan of thy perpetual  
surge,

Mysterious, plaintive, soul-subduing,  
 low,  
 Intoning ever in the ear of Time,  
 Nature's entrancing chorus sweetly  
 swells.  
 The Universal Hymn ascends; none  
 mute;  
 Birds their shrill treble pipe; the insect  
 hum  
 Floats jocund on the liquid air; winds  
 blow  
 Their trumpet-blast, or sweep the forest-  
 harp;  
 Flowers swing their censers, steaming  
 with perfume;  
 The affluent accords still keeping time  
 Unto thy tidal pulses evermore;  
 The bending skies drink in the solemn  
 joy.  
 Thee, God! the sea, Thee, earth and  
 heaven praise.

OBADIAH *enters*.

OBADIAH.

Pardon my step abrupt, intruding thus  
 Upon thy early orisons: I come  
 Charged with grave tidings for the  
 prophet's ear.

ZEPHON.

Welcome, thou faithful servant of the  
 Lord,  
 Unspotted 'midst the vain, luxurious  
 court,  
 My benefactor and protector thou!  
 Never forgotten is the dreadful day  
 When the queen's minions, all athirst for  
 blood,  
 Against the prophets of the Lord went  
 forth  
 To torture and to slay; thy generous  
 care  
 At hazard of thine own the life pre-  
 served  
 Of full four-score, concealed and fed  
 within  
 The dusky covert of old Carmel's caves.  
 May He, who over sacrifice prefers  
 Sweet mercy, and provided in the law  
 For the birds' fledglings, well reward  
 thy love!  
 But what contrives our subtle enemy,  
 Like the autumnal star, baleful as fair?

OBADIAH.

I will narrate in order, from the first.  
 As late I sought, amid the general  
 drought,  
 Some tender meadow for the royal  
 steeds,  
 Sudden the holy prophet, stern as wont,  
 In camlet coarse with leathern girdle  
 bound,  
 Coming I know not whence, before me  
 stood.  
 Awful he spake, the while, fear-para-  
 lyzed,  
 I sank upon my face: "Go, tell thy  
 lord,  
 Elijah waits him here!" "Alas!" I  
 cried,  
 "What is my fault, that thou shouldst  
 work me harm?  
 Of every land the king exacteth oaths  
 They hold thee not, so covets he thy  
 head.  
 Now thou art here, but soon a power  
 unseen  
 Shall whirl thee hence, and when the  
 king shall come,  
 Nor find thee, me deceiver will he brand,  
 And in the transports of his rage, will  
 slay.  
 Harm not, my lord Elijah! one from  
 youth  
 God-fearing, to thy people ever kind."  
 "Distrust me not," he said, "thou art  
 secure;  
 Go tell the king, Elijah waits him here."  
 I sped my message. Straightway rode  
 the king,  
 And found the prophet in the selfsame  
 spot.  
 "Troubler of Israel!" he sharply spoke,  
 "What wouldst thou?" "Not to me be-  
 longs,"  
 Replied the man of God, "that keen re-  
 proach;  
 'Tis thou and thine should wear it, hav-  
 ing left  
 Jehovah's altar for a foreign god.  
 Hear now my challenge. Bring to Car-  
 mel's top,  
 Before assembled Israel, Baal's priests,  
 And likewise all the prophets of the  
 grove,  
 By hundreds reckoned. There our sev-  
 eral faiths

Put thou to trial, and be that avowed  
The faith of Israel, which shall stand  
the test.

Who answereth by fire, let him be God."  
"I marvel at thy boldness," said the king,  
Thou for an outlaw askest much, and  
great

The condescension that consents to this.  
Be it as thou hast said; but, mark me  
well,

Failure doth put in jeopardy thy head."  
"So be it," said the seer, "equal the  
terms

To both. Safe-conduct next I ask."

"For this occasion sole," replied the  
king.

They parted, and the royal mandate  
sped.

The vast procession hither tends, and  
soon

Their barbarous music will fatigue thine  
ear.

With friendly haste I come my lord to  
warn

Of subtle secret plots against his life.  
Not unobservant have I watched the  
arts

Of the queen's sleek and crafty chap-  
pellain,

Her favorite, the Sidonian Ithobal.

ZEPHON.

Already see along the mountain side  
The long procession upward winds its  
way.

First walk the oxen, marked for sacri-  
fice,

With gilded horns, and streaming fillets  
decked;

The sacred car, of ivory and gold,  
With purple canopy, on pillars borne  
Of silver, see! by snow-white horses  
drawn,

Whose seat no mortal weight presumes  
to press.

But tell me, for the court thou knowest  
well,

Who are those women, beautiful but  
bold,

With open vestures given to the wind?

OBADIAH.

The Virgins of the Sun thou dost per-  
ceive,

Trained to the wanton dance and thrill-  
ing song.

In cloisters they the sacred wardrobe  
tend,

The richly broidered veils and priestly  
robes,

And, if belied not, skilled in softer arts.  
Behind them throng the round and well-  
fed priests,

With thurible and sistrum.

ZEPHON.

Who is their chief?

OBADIAH.

'Tis Amaziah, from the lowest dregs  
Upraised, like Jeroboam's vulgar priests;  
Of shallow learning, but with brow of  
brass.

ZEPHON.

What company is that, with sooty robes  
And muffled heads, who seem to march  
apart?

OBADIAH.

They the Chemarim are, and theirs the  
rites

Due to th' Infernal Powers, whose bane-  
ful sway

They humbly deprecate with whine and  
howl.

ZEPHON.

And who are those with high and peaked  
caps,

And wands all rough with quaint mys-  
terious signs?

OBADIAH.

The Casdim they, from far Euphrates'  
shore.

'Tis said they read the heavens as a  
scroll;

They know the planets five, and the  
thrice ten

Celestial watchers, and the figured belt  
Whose influences mark the natal hour.

ZEPHON.

Profane and blasphemous their occult  
trade!

The meek-eyed stars stoop not to watch  
our dust.

OBADIAH.

I marvel much why from the solemn  
pomp  
The prophets of the grove, full twenty  
score,  
Are absent. Can it be, the wily queen  
Distrusts the issue of this challenge  
strange,  
And means to screen her favorites from  
harm?  
Or have they stood upon some jealous  
point  
Of ceremonious precedency?

ZEPHON.

Explain why they her special favorites  
are.

OBADIAH.

Error is various; Truth is ever one;  
So many sects. so many jealousies.  
To Ashtaroth devoted is her zeal,  
The Syrian goddess; in whose shaded  
groves  
What rites are held, beseems me not to  
say.  
Samaria's temple-palace doth inclose  
A stately fane, where worshipped is the  
sun,  
Adonis, Baal, Lord of light and heaven,  
(Baal-zebub, the Fly-god, better named,)   
Its cornices, its statues, censers, wrought  
Of flaming gold. In smaller chapels  
stand  
The symbols of the Starry Host; and  
one,  
To Heaven's queen sole dedicated, bears  
No ornaments but silver. Jezebel,  
After Sidonian custom there resorts.  
Black was the day that brought her to  
our shores,  
With her outlandish and seductive ways!

ZEPHON.

Report doth give her charms beyond her  
sex.

OBADIAH.

Lithe as the willow, graceful as the  
palm

That waves by Elim's wells its plummy  
crown.

Nor is she shamed to snatch a grace  
from art,

With cunning pigments heightening her  
charms,

As roses swimming in a vase of milk.

Most gorgeous her attire, of Sidon's  
looms

The daintiest fabrics. Foreign workman-  
ship

Alone can answer her fastidious taste.

Not hers the modest and retiring grace  
Which in the violet finds its lovely type,

Pure as the dew that fills its blushing  
cup,

Sweet as the scent exhaling back to  
heaven;

Chief ornament of woman, for whose  
loss,

Nor beauty makes amends, nor brilliant  
wit.

ZEPHON.

And what her disposition and her mind?

OBADIAH.

Beyond conception subtle and astute.

Such skill she hath in tongues, ambassa-  
dors,

Astonished, with interpreters dispense.

Her eye, its own expression taught to  
veil,

Looks down into the depths of other  
minds,

And reads their secret thought, its own  
unread.

She hath withal a soft persuasive voice,  
That melts into the ear, and wins as-  
sent,

Without or proof or argument, to what  
she wills.

Fond of dissembling and intrigue, she  
bends

All things to her unscrupulous love of  
rule.

Winning her blandishments, but, when  
provoked,

No netted tigress more infuriate.

Secure she manages the easy king;  
Give him his horses, and his Helbon

wines,

And his Samarian harem, whoso will  
May take the irksome toil of govern-  
ment.



In state she comes, surrounded by her  
guards,  
As fits a queen.

ZEPHON.

And hath she tricked our troops  
In foreign armor, not the manly steel  
Wherewith our valiant fathers glory  
gained?  
Rounded their beards and hair, the  
which our law  
Forbids. Upon their stalwart breasts  
plate-mail  
Of burnished silver flashes in the sun,  
Their silver helms with disc and cres-  
cent topped.  
One hand supports a lance, the other  
wields  
A circular targe of steel with gold inlaid.

OBADIAH.

Of foreign lineage are they; none but  
such  
The queen about her person tolerates.  
Our Hebrews make not supple courtiers;  
stiff  
Their necks and knees to ply the fawn-  
ing trade.  
But we must here arrest discourse, for  
see!  
Th' impatient crowd are clambering up  
the steep,  
Clinging to bush and crag, the shortest  
paths.  
Soon will they stand upon the moun-  
tain's top.  
Oh, vast assemblage! oh, momentous  
day!  
God of our fathers! bare thy mighty  
arm,  
The idol gods confound, and vindicate  
Before the world thy worship and thy  
name!  
Hence! to the hoary prophet let us  
haste. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter MARSHAL and ASSISTANTS, and  
People.*]

MARSHAL.

Quick, marshals! to your posts. The  
Circle trace,

Time-honored symbol of the Lord of  
Day.

The area clear. Assign to each his  
room,  
And keep the rabble close without the  
lines.

Set up the chair of state and canopy  
On yonder knoll. This mountain-height  
the air  
Somewhat attempers. On the swelter-  
ing plain  
The heat and dust endurance do defy.  
O for a shower, a cool, refreshing  
shower!

FIRST ASSISTANT.

Stand back! stand back! what, have ye  
no respect?  
Room for the king, I say!

SECOND ASSISTANT.

By all the gods,  
One might as well beat back the tide at  
flood.

MARSHAL.

Hark to the trumpets! Each one to his  
place!

[*The procession enters; king AHAB,  
the queen, their attendant trains,  
and a multitude of people; after-  
ward OBADIAH and ZEPHON.*]

ALL.

Long live the king!

SIDONIANS.

And live queen Isabel!

AHAB.

At length the level summit we have  
gained  
Of Carmel's well-poised mount, garden  
of God,  
And worthy of the name. Its stony  
ribs  
Health-breathing pines and lordly oaks  
adorn;  
The hazy olives turn their linings up

Like silver lamps amid a night of green;  
While copses of luxuriant laurel fringe  
The rocky dells and sinuous ravines,  
Like a bride's tresses. In profusion wild,  
Anemone, that reddens in its cup,  
In a fine tremble from the zephyr's kiss,  
Crisp hyacinth, and modest asphodel,  
Lend rarest fragrance to the loitering breeze.

And what a charming prospect courts  
the eye,  
Of woods, and plains, and distant mountain-tops!

Lord-steward! as familiar with these scenes,  
Describe the goodly landscape point by point.

OBADIAH.

Truly familiar to me are these haunts;  
For here in boyhood with my bow I roamed

To hunt the whirring partridge, or to trap

The stealthy fox that spoiled the early vines;

And from the crystal brooks oft slaked my thirst—

Yon crystal brooks that never cease their flow.

See distant Tabor looming up on high  
A verdurous islet in the sere champaign.  
There Sirion's range defines our northern bound,

Amana's peak, and Shenir wreathed in mist,

Where lions prowl, and leopards have their lair.

Outlined distinct against the glowing sky,

Lo! Nature's priest, majestic Lebanon,  
In cope and mitre of unblemished snow,  
Doth scatter dewy benedictions round.  
His ancient cedars stand in rev'rent row,

The Levites of the sylvan sanctuary,  
Their solemn psalm uplifting full and clear

To the responsive trumpets of the storm.

Southeastward see the long pale line that marks

The lordly pile near Jezreel newly built,

In wealth of myrtles, and of vines embowered,

With scarlet glories of pomegranates graced.

Commanding site, for princes fit retreat!

AHAB.

To round my park, an angle I require  
Of the adjacent vineyard, but the churl  
Denies the sale. Whom all the gods confound!

JEZEBEL.

Thou shalt, my lord, possess it; rest at ease.

A king should find his lightest wishes law,

Else were the golden round a barren toy.

OBADIAH.

Beneath us undulates the battle-plain  
Of Esdraelon; as our fathers tell,

There Barak, like a torrent, from the height

Of Tabor, rushed impetuous. Not the strength

Of iron chariots could resist the stroke.  
The sword devoured its thousands,

drunk with blood,

And ancient Kishon swept them to the sea,

Yon westerling sea, where Carmel dips his foot.

The blue expanse melts in the bluer sky  
Flecked with the fleets of Tarshish and

of Tyre,  
The land of Caphtor, and far Chittim's isles.

JEZEBEL.

Oh, blessed, blessed sea! that laves the shores

Of my beloved Sidon. When shall I,  
My country! see thy tide-kissed walls again,

Thy piers, thy palaces, thy princely pomp?

ITHOBAL.

Madam, restrain thy tears, I do implore;

The nobles see this passionate burst ill-pleased.

## JEZEBEL.

Excuse, my lords, my feelings' ardent  
gush!  
The tears would flow at sight of the  
blue waves  
That wash my old, beloved, ancestral  
halls.  
The shell will murmur of its ocean-  
home;  
The prisoned dove its native wood-notes  
trill;  
The smitten flint its heart of fire betray.  
Nature hath had her due, and I am calm.

## AHAB.

Heralds! make proclamation of the  
cause  
That here convenes us.

## HERALD.

Be it known to all,  
Our sovereign lord the king, of his good  
pleasure,  
Doth convocate the tribes upon these  
heights,  
That solemn ordeal may be made be-  
twixt  
The two religions, Baal's and Jehovah's.  
Three years of drought have turned the  
earth to iron,  
The heavens to brass. The herbage is  
burnt up.  
The husbandman, distraught, doth  
thrust his knife  
Into the veins of his last ox, to quench  
his thirst.  
That altar, whereupon the fire from  
heaven  
Shall swift descend, and burn the sac-  
rifice,  
To be succeeded by refreshing showers  
Of copious rain, shall instant be con-  
fessed  
The altar of the True and Only God.  
There bow  
The grateful nation, and no other own!  
With this condition; whichever party  
Shall fail, do put in jeopardy their lives  
A forfeit and atonement to the God.

## AHAB.

Call the Chartummim and Astrologers.  
Melzar, are all the auguries auspicious?

## MELZAR.

May the king live forever! by the rules  
Of divination, freely pecking birds,  
The bright sons of the quiver duly  
drawn,  
Chaldean numbers big with coming fate,  
The aspects and conjunctions of the  
stars,  
There never shone a more auspicious  
hour.  
Fearless proceed, the issue must be  
happy.

## MAACHAH.

But where's the vaunting prophet, at  
whose call  
Kings, priests, and commons crowd  
these flinty heights?  
Or does he mock us? for, in sooth, no  
law  
His savage nature owns but his caprice.

## HIEL.

Mayhap the holy man hath of his fears  
Taken wise counsel, dreading a defeat;  
For blusterers, when subjected to the  
test,  
Oft, like a treacherous bow, do swerve  
aside.  
Trust me, my lord, he'll hardly show his  
face  
Or here obtrude his sanctimonious cant.

## AHAB.

What saith my steward? for thou first  
didst bear  
His message. Wilt thou now the surety  
be  
For his appearance?

## OBADIAH.

My most gracious lord,  
Misdoubt him not; within that rind  
austere  
Lie rugged honesty and downright truth.  
Averse to rites of worship he loves not,  
He but delays till they have been per-  
formed.  
I'll answer for his presence with my life.

## JEZEBEL.

I would your Grace would put him un-  
der ban,  
And set a price upon his stubborn head.

AHAB.

My queen, what have we now to apprehend  
 From a defenceless and unarmed wretch,  
 Whose followers have melted all away  
 Like snow in Salmon? Not a tongue is found  
 To lisp against our fair establishment.  
 The fang's extracted.

JEZEBEL.

But the venom's left.

AHAB.

Whence is thine unrelenting enmity?

JEZEBEL.

The presence of reprovers is unwelcome,  
 Though from their lips no syllable escape.

Rude as his shaggy garb his manners are,

As blunt to queens as to their tiring-maids.

AHAB.

I too dislike him, yet I feel there's good  
 'Neath that rough outside. Would he  
 were my friend!

Marshal! the ceremonies may proceed.

[*An altar is erected. The Virgins of the Sun chant the Hymn of Inauguration. At the close of every strophe, they dance round the altar in a circle.*]

#### CHORUS OF THE VIRGINS OF THE SUN.

I.

Beat the ground with briskest measure,  
 Bound each pulse with liveliest pleasure!

Merrily the sistrums tinkle,  
 Rapidly the white feet twinkle;  
 Round and round in mystic ring,  
 Choir of planets symboling!

Joy and rapture rush along  
 On the swelling tide of song;

And with warm exultant strain,  
 Greet the Day-god's welcome reign!

II.

Hail th' auspicious moment, hail!  
 Over hill and over dale,  
 O'er the rivers, o'er the sea,  
 Streams the dazzling majesty.  
 First the courier of the dawn  
 Wakes the lark upon the lawn,  
 Till from every feathered throat  
 Richest symphonies upfloat;  
 And with warm exultant strain,  
 Greet the Day-god's welcome reign.

III.

Nor alone the birds and flowers  
 Gratulate the rosy hours;  
 Busy hands and earnest hearts  
 Rouse to act their wonted parts;  
 Toils of peasants, cares of kings,  
 Traffic with its woven wings;  
 All the joyous world's astir,  
 Leaping from night's sepulchre;  
 And with warm exultant strain,  
 Greet the Day-god's welcome reign.

IV.

Weary lid and fevered head,  
 Tossing on a sleepless bed;  
 Mothers, half with terror wild,  
 Bending o'er a moaning child;  
 Sentries pacing at their post;  
 Sailors off a dangerous coast;  
 Frequent turn a longing eye  
 To the flushing eastern sky;  
 And with warm exultant strain,  
 Greet the Day-god's welcome reign.

V.

By the laughing Hours attended,  
 Onward moves the pageant splendid;  
 Dappled Dawn with diamond dew,  
 Sunset pomp of Tyrian hue;  
 Spring, with green and tender shoots,  
 Autumn, with its luscious fruits;  
 Men, who thrive these gifts upon,  
 Pour their grateful benison;  
 And with warm, exultant strain,  
 Greet the Day-god's welcome reign.

ELIJAH enters, with the Sons of the Prophets.

AHAB.

In a good hour thou comest, hoary seer!  
 To save thy name from damage, and thy truth;

Already had the whisper gone abroad,  
That thou thy cause had yielded by default.

ELIJAH.

My liege! I come to pay the homage due  
The ruler of my country, faithless else  
To my religion and the holy Law.  
Which curse disloyalty. Not mine the tongue  
To sow sedition, or disturb the realm.  
The sword and sceptre are from God;  
by him  
Kings reign and princes judge with equity,  
And likest Him they show, when found most just.

For magistracy is of God ordained  
A social blessing, anarchy and crime  
To banish, and the feeble to defend.  
Raised to the topmost round of power,  
for this  
They to the King of kings shall give account.

No traitor I, no dark conspirator,  
Were I admitted to thy counsels, prince!  
Thy throne should stand upon a firmer base,  
And thou shouldst be a king indeed, uncurbed  
By priestly malisons and auguries,  
That hidden power, o'ershadowing the throne.

AHAB.

By Tammuz' wounds, I like thy frankness much;  
Such speech hath long been strange unto mine ear.  
Thou shalt my prophet be, my chappellain,  
Director of the royal conscience, not  
An idle sinecure. But to the point:  
The tribes are met, the solemn ordeal waits;  
Dost thou not shrink, thy single self opposed  
To overawing numbers?

ELIJAH.

Not alone  
Stands the brave champion of a holy cause;  
Greater and more his friends are than his foes

Fire-chariots of the sky encompass him;  
The angels count his every step; the just  
And good bend from their heavenly thrones to give

Their approbation and their sympathy.  
And should he fall, his infinite reward  
Dies not. The listening ages catch his name,  
And send it onward. Like a trumpet's blast

Men's hearts to leap within them at the sound;  
Heroic virtue gains new suffrages,  
And from the martyr's ashes spring fresh fires.

Why should I quail? To God I trust my cause;  
Who feareth God can have no meaner fear.

AHAB.

Ho! Amaziah! 'twere a pleasant thought,  
Now that confronted are the chiefest men  
Of these adverse religions, that ye hold,  
The whilst the sacrifices are prepared,  
An argument to entertain the time.

AMAZIAH.

My lord, O king! 'twould be a compromise  
Of dignity, for us to condescend  
To argue with schismatics. Only that  
Which owns its likely fallibility  
Seeks and rejoices in debate, as if  
In noise and clamor weakness to conceal.

But our religion needs no argument;  
It on prescription, not on reason, stands.  
Ours is the old religion, handed down  
From hoar antiquity. And who but knows

That from the earliest times, while  
Moses was

A slave in Egypt, nor yet had despoiled  
The Emims and Zamzummims of their lands,

The king Adonis, lord of Light and Day,

Received the homage of the Syrian maids.

Before his orient pomp the prostrate world,

As now, with early reverence, adored,  
Ev'n Abraham, their vaunted patriarch,



A Chaldean was, and worshipper of fire.

ELIJAH.

What though a thousand years have  
come and gone,  
Since, from the second cradle of our  
race,  
'Twixt Ararat's twin peaks, the nations  
swarmed,  
And all that time in Error's chains were  
bound?  
What though our ancestors, ere Abram's  
day,  
In Aramæa, blind idolaters,  
Bowed to the Sun or Fire? No lapse  
of time  
Can Error's nature change, or conse-  
crate.  
Error is Error still, nor can be Truth,  
Though one be but the outbirth of an  
hour,  
The other claim the centuries for its  
own.  
Talk we of hoar antiquity? Lead back  
Thy thought to that majestic hour, when  
first  
God into being spake the Earth and  
Heaven.  
Over the vast Eternal Silences  
In Night and Horror veiled, rang forth  
the word,  
"Let there be Light!" and from the  
chaos, Light  
Sprang forth obedient, all the infant  
worlds  
Revealing: while the glorious Sons of  
God;  
Bright morning-stars, in chorus sang  
for joy.  
Then first the sun, a new-made orb, was  
set  
To rule the day, the moon to rule the  
night,  
In peaceful and unwearied ministry,  
Jehovah's will fulfilling for man's good.  
And short the homage stops, that stays  
on them,  
Mere servants without mind or life, nor  
higher  
Rises to the great Hand that lit their  
fires,  
To creatures giving the Creator's due.  
What courtier suing to his gracious  
king,

Lavishes on the scribe his bursting  
thanks,  
And for the royal donor has no praise?

AMAZIAH.

Blank atheism! What! the glorious  
Sun  
Nought but a globe of fire, a vulgar  
lamp,  
For meanest deeds of meanest men de-  
vised!  
Sublimest views are ours; that gorgeous  
orb,  
Upon whose blinding splendors none  
may gaze,  
The palace is of Sovereign Deity,  
His seat and dwelling-place, his flaming  
throne,  
Majestic chariot, whence he guides the  
spheres.  
Not otherwise the Moon, and several  
Stars,  
Showering down radiance from their  
golden urns,  
Are the abodes of gods, of spirits bright,  
Presiding o'er the elements, man's natal  
hour,  
The growth of empires, or their threat-  
ened fall.

ELIJAH.

Not me, rather thyself an atheist deem,  
Who dost the true and only God deny.  
Which of thine idols, wood, or brass, or  
stone,  
Silver or gold, hath made and fashioned  
thee  
And giv'n thee breath? How could they  
ought create,  
Themselves the fragile work of human  
hands,  
Half on a shrine, and half behind the  
hearth?  
My God Creator is of Earth and  
Heaven,  
And all things in them that do live or  
move.  
Where were these mighty gods, these  
sovereign powers,  
With high celestial influences impregn'd,  
When the five kings before great  
Joshua fled?  
"Sun, stand thou still on Gibeon!" he  
cried,

"And stay, thou Moon, o'er Ajalon's  
 deep vale!"  
 They heard the mandate, and their fer-  
 vid wheels  
 Arrested in mid-heaven; nor e'er was  
 known  
 A day so long as that, when at the voice  
 Of mortal man the heavens obedient  
 stood  
 To help him rout their faithful worship-  
 pers.  
 Strange! they should listen rather to  
 their foe,  
 Deaf to their votaries' despairing  
 prayer!  
 These are thy gods, Samaria! put to  
 shame  
 Before Jehovah, true and only God,  
 The God of Gods, the Lord of Hosts,  
 Most High.

## AMAZIAH.

And canst thou glory in a cruel God,  
 Ruthless and partial, giving to the  
 sword  
 Whole unoffending nations, whose sole  
 fault  
 Was fighting for their altars and their  
 homes  
 Against the insults of a foreign horde?  
 The patriot's meed, the patriot's wreath,  
 be theirs!

## ELIJAH.

In holy horror to lift up thine hands  
 At thought of cruelty, doth well become  
 Those who to devils sacrifice their sons,  
 To Canaan's idol-gods their daughters  
 hear!  
 Now harken, and thy calumny retract.  
 From Egypt fled, asylum Israel sought,  
 Molesting no one on their peaceful way,  
 Till first themselves assailed by every  
 king  
 From Zoar unto Zidon, passage free  
 Refusing, or opposing them in arms.  
 Compelled to self-defence, they drew the  
 sword,  
 Putting their foes to ignominious rout;  
 And thus they won themselves a resting-  
 place.  
 Claim not the patriot's hallowed name  
 or meed

For wretches stained with deeds of lust  
 and blood,  
 Who tossed their smiling babes to  
 Moloch's fires.  
 The land, unable longer to sustain  
 Their vile abominations, spued them  
 forth;  
 A holy God beheld their measure full.  
 Has high prerogative, it is, to use  
 Famine or earthquake, pestilence or  
 sword,  
 To sweep profane transgressors from  
 the earth.  
 Behold the Vale of Siddim scathed with  
 fire,  
 And sunk beneath the sullen Sea of Salt,  
 Whose ruined cities, smothered in their  
 lust,  
 Attest the justice of avenging heaven.  
 And these abominations ye would fain  
 Lift to the shrine once more, your dung-  
 hill gods  
 Seeking to please with rites detestable.  
 Repent! and to the bats your idols fling,  
 Or robed in vengeance shall the Lord  
 unlock  
 The armory of heaven. Then shall his  
 eye  
 Spare not nor pity. Think not it shall  
 prove  
 A mountain-echo vain. On foreign  
 shores  
 Exiled and naked, labor-sore and sad,  
 The heathen whom you copy, shall you  
 serve;  
 Already buds the rod of chastisement,  
 The web is wove that mantles you with  
 shame.  
 Oh Israel! oh my country! shun the fate  
 Which heaven-daring wickedness in-  
 sures;  
 O Israel, hear! The Lord thy God is  
 ONE!

ZABDIEL, (*aside.*)

His words do stir me like a trumpet's  
 sound,  
 Waking up long-forgotten memories;  
 I learned them standing by my mother's  
 knee,  
 A happy child of innocence and prayer.

HEZRON, (*aside.*)

It is too true; the land in mourning lies  
 For crimes at which humanity may weep,  
 While Modesty conceals her blushing  
 face.  
 Like priest, like people! Princes and  
 the crowd  
 Follow with greed these base enormities.

## HIEL THE BETHELITE.

Why quote the legends that have had  
 their day,  
 Long antiquated and exploded quite!  
 The world is wiser grown, and in these  
 myths  
 Of Tammuz, or Osiris, or Adonis,  
 Of Isis or Astarte, we discern  
 Profoundest truths of astronomic lore,  
 Seasons and solstices prefiguring.  
 'Tis a fair thought with dance and song  
 to hail  
 Nature reviving from her wintry trance,  
 And from her icy fetters joyful freed;  
 Spring, with its buds and birds, and  
 breath of balm,  
 Its blowing flowers, and opulence of  
 leaves;  
 A resurrection from the shades of  
 Death.  
 But for those Hebrew writings, none  
 that prize  
 A name for culture or a liberal mind  
 Respect their superstitious legends weak  
 Of worlds made out of nothing, when we  
 know  
 Matter must be eternal; and of gods  
 That plagued th' Egyptians in the wil-  
 derness.  
 'Tis the same books denounce a curse  
 on him  
 Who would the City of Palm-trees dare  
 rebuild.  
 The curse has harmless stood and will;  
 and I  
 Am he who will expose it to contempt.

## ELIJAH.

Behold! the messenger is on his way  
 To tell thee the foundation hath been  
 laid  
 Now in thy first-born's blood. One after  
 one

Shall of thy children follow, giving  
 space  
 For thought and for repentance, which  
 if thou  
 Fail to improve aright, the lofty gates  
 Shall in thy youngest darling be set up.

## JEZEBEL.

'Tis not for me to enter in the lists  
 Of keen polemics. Theologic war  
 Suits nor my sex nor taste. Not judg-  
 ment cold,  
 But warm instinctive impulse governs  
 me.  
 Much more congenial to my woman's  
 heart,  
 Than a stern God, in storm and thunder  
 drest,  
 Is she who glides, a gentle patroness,  
 In silver shallop 'mid the island-stars,  
 The mild Astarte, to our frailties kind,  
 Full of a mother's sympathy for all.  
 Sweet mother! Queen of Heaven! be  
 hers my vows,  
 The incense, and the monthly offering!  
 But harsh thy creed, old man! and rude  
 thy speech,  
 Rough as the sea, when boisterous  
 Cadim blows,  
 Or winds Etesian chafe the billowy  
 waste.  
 Unpolished and uncouth thy native  
 tribes,  
 Beside the more refined and courtly  
 realms  
 Of wise old Egypt, or Assyria grand,  
 Sidon, the populous mart of all the  
 world,  
 Or Tyre, her island-daughter, young  
 and fair.  
 There taste is nursed, there elegance  
 presides;  
 There art and science all their marvels  
 show;  
 There commerce dazzles with her wealth  
 of wares,  
 Exquisite products of the wheel and  
 loom,  
 Spices, and gems, and royallest of dyes;  
 The very sands with crystal treasures  
 teem.  
 Shrines, temples, stately palaces adorn  
 Each avenue, and charm the stranger's  
 eye.

A thousand keels, dripping with foreign  
brine,  
Borne down with rich freight to the  
water's edge,  
The harbor throng, luxuriously equipped  
With brodered sails and banks of ivory.  
How far beyond the base simplicity  
Of the half-tutored Hebrews, who can  
show  
No arts, no commerce, no soul-breath-  
ing forms  
By master-hands from purest marble  
wrought!  
Nay, when the only temple that they  
boast  
Was at vast cost of toil and treasure  
reared,  
Unequal to the task they stood confest.  
Sidonian builders shaped the mighty  
pile,  
Sidonian skill the cedars carved, and  
hewed  
Column and cornice from the stubborn  
stone.  
Say, which the better creed, most worthy  
heaven,  
Which most embellishes and brightens  
life?

## ELIJAH.

What are the vaunted miracles of art,  
The sumptuous colonnade, the sculp-  
tured pomp,  
The thrift of trade, the niceties of taste,  
The sophist's swelling words, the harp's  
sweet tones,  
What to the welfare of a deathless soul!  
A soul in ruins! an immortal mind,  
By error led astray, and kindred vice,  
Fall'n like a star from heaven; its glory-  
robes  
Besmirched and sullied in the mire of  
sin!  
Better to starve in honest rags, than roll  
A pampered wanton, to the shades of  
death;  
Better the uncouth peasant, rude in  
speech,  
Who knows the true God and him know-  
ing loves,  
Than the proud prince who bows to  
idols false,  
And as he bows, proclaims his deeper  
shame.

With pen of iron and point of diamond  
writ,  
The Truth of God defies the tooth of  
Time,  
Imperishable 'mid the world's wild  
wreck,  
When Noph and Nineveh shall buried  
be.  
And thou, gay, godless Sidon, drunk  
with wealth,  
Thy revenue the harvest of the sea;  
Thou that the people of the Lord dost  
scorn,  
And tempt them with thy vile idolatries;  
The sword without, and pestilence  
within,  
Shall lay thy princes low; the captive  
yoke  
Shall gall thy neck; deserted and de-  
cayed,  
Thy silt-choked harbor and thy beg-  
gared site  
Shall to the far-off ages loud proclaim,  
Who God dishonor, shall dishonored be.  
Howl, haughty Tyre! thy glory taketh  
wing;  
Prepare the sackcloth and the ashes  
strew!  
I hear the shout of war, the clashing  
lance,  
The trampling hoof, the hollow-rumbling  
wheel,  
The tower and rampart thund'ring to  
the dust,  
And leaving thee a bald and naked rock.  
Ye nations, pass the cup of trembling  
round,  
Nor dare to put it from your vice-worn  
lips!

## MAACHAH.

Old man! thou art severe; thou hast no  
ruth,  
No pity in thy soul. Thy veins were  
filled  
Not from a woman's, but a tiger's  
breasts.

## ELIJAH.

Not so! God knoweth, who shall be my  
judge,  
'Tis not from native love of savageness,  
Nor from delight in pain, that I employ

Warnings and threatenings to deter from  
sin.

Not to my sympathy in vain appealed  
The widow of Sidonian Zarephath,  
Nor none o'er her reviving son more  
joyed.

Unfeeling call me not! My heart doth  
bleed

To see my people perish for the want  
Of thought, like ships upon the breakers  
driv'n.

Most willingly, t' avert th' impending  
fate,

On mine own head I'd call the thunders  
down.

Sole witness for the true religion left,  
With bitter tears and groans I cry aloud,  
O Israel, hear! The Lord thy God is  
ONE!

'Tis thou, O queen! that playest the  
cruel part,

For thou thy rightful influence dost  
abuse,

To lure thy son to worship Baalim,  
Their ruin thus assuring, and his own.

ITHOBAL.

Prophet, forbear! thou touchest delicate  
ground;

The sanctity which princes doth environ  
Should be preserved inviolate. If thou  
Must prophesy of ill, to Judah turn,  
Where with congenial bigots thou may'st  
herd;

But vent not thy rebukes where courtly  
ears,

Fastidious, are to smother language  
used.

ELIJAH.

Truth is the passion of my soul. For  
Truth

I'd tread the burning marl, or dare the  
rage

Of lions and of leopards, or of men  
More fierce than either. Unappalled I'd  
stand

Beneath the frown of power, or face the  
shock

Of the incensed and surging multitude,  
By prejudice and malice hounded on.

Torn be my tortured body limb from  
limb,

My martyr heart hiss in the curling  
flames,

Ere I the word of God should compro-  
mise!

Soon as the Spirit Divine, with hallowed  
fire,

Exalting sense and soul, my lips doth  
touch,

All meaner objects vanish from my  
sight,

Nor thrones nor dungeons dazzle or  
confound.

The word put in my mouth I'll speak, if  
men

Lend or refuse their ears. Be it that ye  
wish

No further parley! Let us to the test.

Less than a miracle will not suffice

This contest to decide. Who answereth  
By fire, O Israel! he shall be thy God.

AHAB.

A limping course hath this debate pur-  
sued,

Like every other, leaving either side  
Just where it found them. As for my  
dull brain,

Stunned by these subtleties, sufficeth it  
I am th' anointed ruler of this realm.

'Tis my prerogative to legislate

In civil and ecclesiastic things supreme.  
With rights of conscience I ne'er inter-  
fere,

All as they please may think, but must  
conform

To the established worship. Odious  
schism

And factious discord I abominate,

Nor license disobedience to the laws.

Go, heralds! bid the holy priests prepare  
The gravest rites of their religion now,  
And in our dire d'stresses spare no pains  
To make the immortal gods propitious  
to us.

ELIJAH.

Aye, bid them spare no pains, put forth  
their strength,

And summon all th' array of their re-  
sources.

How long 'twixt two opinions will ye  
halt,

O Israel! as cripples sway about,



Or as a bird that hops from spray to spray,  
And settles upon neither? If convinced  
Jehovah is the true and only God,  
Almighty, all-sufficient, perfect, good,  
Give him your homage, pay to him your  
vows.

If Baal be the true and living God,  
Serve Baal; for ye cannot worship both.  
Why silent all? and have ye ne'er a word  
To answer me, from policy or fear?  
Why, see! I, only I, one feeble man,  
Am left of all the prophets of the Lord,  
While twenty score are ranged on Baal's  
side;

What have ye then to fear with such  
vast odds?

Give us two bullocks; and let Baal's  
priests

Make their selection, dress their sacrifice,

And lay it on the altar; but no fire  
Put 'neath the wood, as is their wont to  
do.

I will the other bullock treat likewise.  
Then call ye on your gods; and I will  
call

Upon the sole name of Jehovah-God.  
And let the God who answereth by fire  
Be publicly confessed the only God.  
Must not the God of Fire his votaries  
hear?

Is not the element at his command?  
Shall it be said, he either lacks the  
power,

Or else the will, to send the kindling  
flame?

And lacking either, does he merit hom-  
age?

Are ye content?

ALL.

We are; thou hast well said.

HERALD.

The altar's reared, the sacrifice disposed,  
They wait but for the royal word.

AHAB.

Proceed.

[The Priests of Baal march round  
the altar, singing in chorus, and  
dancing vehemently at the close of  
each strophe.]

## CHORUS OF THE PRIESTS OF BAAL.

### I.

Dread Lord of heaven, sole source of  
day,

To whom our constant orisons we pay,  
Hear us, great king!

Adoni, hear!

Thee we revere,  
Accept our offering.

### II.

Behold our blighted fields!

No fruit the olive yields,

No more the land with milk and honey  
flows;

The pools and fountains fail,

The fainting cattle wail,

Bashan is parched, and faded Sharon's  
rose.

O vine of Sibmah, mourn!

Upon the ear is borne

No more the shout of merry vintagers;  
The presses are all still;

On valley and on hill

No voice of joy the slumbering echo  
stirs.

### III.

Beautiful Water, best gift of the sky,  
Cool to the touch, and clear to the eye;  
Hidden deep in the shaded well,  
Bubbling up from the mossy dell.

Beautiful in the rocky grot,  
Where the heats of noontide enter not;  
In the dewy pearls that sprinkle the lea,  
In the shimmering lake, and the dimpling  
sea.

Beautiful in the rainbow bright,  
Woven of mists and threads of light;  
Beautiful in the vernal shower,  
Greening the leaf, and tinting the flower.

Beautiful in the sandy waste,  
The Eye of the Desert, with palm trees  
graced;

With frantic joy the caravans cry,  
Beautiful Water! best gift of the sky.

Windows of heaven, open again,  
Refresh once more the thirsty plain!  
Merciful Lord! Thy suppliants spare,  
Close not thine ear to a nation's prayer!

## IV.

Why do thy quenchless ardors  
burn,  
Why dost thou our petitions spurn,  
Why do thy fire-topt arrows fly  
Vengeful athwart the brazen sky?  
Thy altars we have not forsaken;  
The holy fire  
We have not suffered to expire;  
And freely hath the choicest of the herd  
been taken.

## V.

Not thus did Nature mourn,  
Disheveled and forlorn,  
When in the shady Syrian grove,  
The queen of Beauty and of Love,  
Her divine and perfect charms  
Gave to thy consenting arms,  
All nature breathed of happiness;  
From their gold-lipped chalices  
A thousand flowers sweet odors  
shed  
To grace thy happy nuptial-bed.  
All the dreamy noon was still,  
Save the rippling of the rill,  
And the doves, with breasts of  
snow  
Cooing soothingly and low;  
Slumberous zephyrs softly sighed,  
Kissing myrtles soft replied;  
Sifted through the leafy screen  
Mellow light fell, golden-green;  
All thy faculties entrancing,  
Every pulse with rapture dancing;  
Thus, in the shady Syrian grove,  
The hours were given to thee and  
love.

## VI.

By those thrilling ecstasies,  
By that lunacy of bliss;  
By their fond remembrance now  
Clothe with smiles once more thy  
brow.

Hear us imploring,  
See us adoring!

## VII.

Recall that day of woe,  
When to the chase thou fain wouldst go;  
In vain thy queen around thee clung,  
In vain prophetic warnings filled her  
tongue.  
Then met thee, in the forest lone,  
The cruel boar of Lebanon;

See his visage grim and dusky,  
His bloodshot eye, his horrid tusk!  
The slender spear within thine hand  
Could not his powerful charge with-  
stand;  
Rushing like a wintry storm,  
He dashed to earth thy lissom form;  
And ripping up thy naked side,  
Tore a ghastly wound and wide.  
So a lily, frail and fair,  
Cloven by the ruthless share,  
Sudden drops its beauteous head,  
Sinking on the turfy bed.

## VIII.

From that wound thy life's warm  
blood  
Welled amain in stanchless flood,  
Dabbling all thy sunny hair;  
Thy body, delicate and fair,  
Smooth as rosebud of the spring,  
In clotted gore enveloping.  
It bathed the wind-flower growing  
nigh,  
And tinged it with a sanguine dye;  
Then, trickling onward to the river,  
Incarnadined its waves forever,  
And flower and river still retain  
The memory of that mournful stain.

## IX.

What words the frantic grief can paint  
That poor Astarte's bosom rent,  
As by that mangled corse she sate,  
Utterly disconsolate!  
The Syrian maids, with sobs and sighs,  
Mingled their deepest sympathies,  
Seated like mourners on the ground:  
"Tammuz is dead!" the woods,  
"Tammuz is dead!" the floods,  
"Tammuz is dead!" the rocky hills re-  
bound.

## X.

Upstarting from her trance of grief,  
From heaven the goddess seeks relief,  
And all her potent influence yields;  
Reluctant Death his victim yields.

Tammuz revives,  
He lives, he lives!  
Restored to upper air,  
Again the joys of life and love to  
share.

The Syrian maids  
Bid woods and glades

Once more re-echo his belovéd name.  
And Nile from Byblos learns to celebrate his fame.

## XI.

And still, from year to year,  
With songs and dances they appear;  
And still, from age to age,  
All people in thy praise engage;  
Whether with flowing hair and foot of gold,  
Thou dost the portals of the Dawn unfold,  
Or sett'st 'mid gorgeous piles of crimson glory,  
All climes and tongues rehearse the pleasing story.

Then hear our prayer!  
Lowly we bend,  
Deliverance send,  
Sweet Tammuz, hear!

## XII.

God of day,  
Prince of light,  
Disperser of clouds,  
Scatterer of night;  
Adoni great,  
Sphered in splendor,  
Life of the world,  
Our health's defender,  
Hear, Baal, hear,  
Answer our prayer!

## ZABDIEL.

If in vociferation prayer consist,  
Or clamor be the test of piety,  
Then iron lungs and throats of brass must rate  
The chief equipment of superior saints.  
Prayer is the quiet breathing of the heart,  
The lowly whisper, or the contrite sigh,  
Which He who made the heart interprets well;  
Only when calm, the lake reflecteth heaven.  
See how they toil and sweat, at vast expense  
Of nerve and muscle, vaulting in the air,  
While "Baal! Baal! Baal!" is their cry,  
Repeated o'er and o'er, a thousand times.

## HEZRON.

And see, as with a sudden frenzy seized,

They leap upon the altar, and with shouts  
And mad contortions, cut with lancets keen  
And sacrificial knives, their arms and breasts.

## ELIJAH.

Loud and yet louder lift your urgent voice,  
And spill the crimson tide, whose stream delights,  
Sweeter than incense, your blood-thirsty god!  
Louder and louder cry! spare not your breath!  
For sprung from mortals, to your god may cleave  
Some weaknesses of frail mortality.  
Perchance he sleeps; for now 'tis past high noon,  
When gods do oft retire to cover up  
Their feet, and slumber in some cool recess.

Perchance he tarries in the nether world,  
Not having heard the vivifying voice  
That terminates his hybernation drear.  
Perchance with Ashtaroth he converse holds,

And as he lips his leman, fails to catch  
Your feeble supplications. Or, mayhap,  
Fond of the chase, again he flies the boar,

And drops again beneath the deadly tusk.  
Or, it may be, on Ethiopian hills,  
A twelve days' journey gone, he keeps a feast,

And nectar sips 'mid all his jocund troop,

Nor heeds the miseries of mortal men.  
Cry, cry aloud! Shout till your throats are hoarse,

For day is waning, and as yet no voice  
Nor answering sign gives proof of being heard.

## AMAZIAH.

Stop the baldheaded prater's ribald tongue,  
Nor longer let him vent his blasphemies!  
He hath profaned the awful name, at which

The world adores and trembles. Wizard hoar!

Thy counter-prayers and secret arts prevail

Against a nation's warm devotions.  
Here,

Here see the fatal cause of this long drought!

No wonder that the angry god withholds  
His favor, whilst that this blasphemer  
lives.

We have besieged his throne; with flocks  
and herds

Incessantly his altar-fires have smoked,  
And all in vain. Behold the guilty cause!  
The god demands a human sacrifice,  
And richer blood, his chiefest enemy's,  
Must flow, and now, that he may be appeased.

Haste, seize the traitor, bind his aged  
limbs,

And lay him as a victim on the stone!

ALL.

Down with the wretch! kill him! away  
with him!

Let not his presence more pollute the  
earth!

AMAZIAH.

Our royal master sees the people's rage;  
It swelleth like the sea, nor can be  
curbed.

Will he not yield consent?

JEZEBEL.

I give my voice,  
To have this insolent wretch at once cut  
off.

MAACHAH.

The gloomy bigot! let him die the death.

HIEL.

Aye, crush the reptile, on him stamp the  
heel,

And leave no fragment to all future  
time.

AHAB.

My lords and ladies! much it irketh me  
To say ye nay; but I have pledged my  
word,  
Safe conduct have engaged. It must be  
kept.

AMAZIAH.

And suffer vile blasphemers to escape!  
What rights of faith preserved, or  
promises,  
Can outlaws claim, the enemies avowed  
Of God and man?

HIEL.

Spare not the sniveling dotard!  
Smite the conspirator against thy peace,  
The troubler of the realm!

ITHOBAL.

I thank the gods,  
For this propitious hour! Thine influence add,  
O queen! of him thou hatest rid thyself!

JEZEBEL.

Art thou a king, and dost thou yet allow  
Petty punctilios to restrain thy hands?  
Kings are above all law; the fountains  
they  
Of honor; in the place of God they  
stand;  
Their doings none may question or gain-  
say.

AHAB.

My noble lords! the royal word is  
pledged.  
To all my faults I dare not add this  
crime,  
Dishonored in the world's eyes and mine  
own.  
And since this trial should approach its  
close,  
And Baal's priests the livelong day have  
prayed,  
It is but just the prophet in his turn  
Now offer sacrifice; and if so be,  
No answering sign from heaven be  
vouchsafed,  
As he this convocation first proposed,  
I to your pleasure will surrender him.  
Heralds! make room, all needful things  
provide.

ELIJAH.

Countrymen, Hebrews, Sons of Israel,  
Of him who, as a prince, had power with  
God!

If any faithful and devout remain  
In all this concourse, let him hither  
come,  
And build with me an altar to the Lord.  
I charge you by those grand old mem-  
ories

Which cluster round our nation's history.  
Can you forget the wonders and the  
signs;

The land of bondage, and the pilgrim  
march;

The pillared cloud; the separated sea;  
The thundered law, and Sinai in a blaze;  
The manna and the rock; the swollen  
flood

Of Jordan parted in the midst; the walls  
Of Jericho at seventh circuit fall'n;  
The giant Anakim, the banded kings,  
Vanquished by Israel's victorious arms?  
Can ye forget, O Israel! who nursed  
Your weakness into strength, on eagle-  
wings

Upbare you, like a mother overwatched  
And to your present greatness led your  
steps?

Will you forsake Jehovah, Lord of  
Hosts?

Upon this height, by hands of godly  
men,

In generations past, an altar rose  
To the true God. Dismantled and broke  
down,

Ours be it now this ruin to repair.  
Set up twelve stones on which no tool  
hath passed,

According to the number of the tribes,  
And dig around the base a hollow trench.  
Next pile the wood; the bullock kill and  
flay;

And all his pieces place upon the wood;  
It is a whole burnt-offering to the Lord.  
Wherefore, to testify his world-wide  
rule,

I wave the shoulder to the north, whence  
come

Frost or fair weather, as his breath di-  
rects;

Unto the south, impregn'd with soften-  
ing winds;

Unto the east, that hails the rising sun;  
Unto the west, that sees its going down.  
And now, to silence scoffing lips, that  
fain

Would prate of juggling and collusive  
arts,

Four water-barrels empty on the whole.  
A second time repeat it; and a third;  
Until both altar, sacrifice, and wood,  
Are saturated, and the trench o'erflows.

ZABDIEL.

Oh, how my heart did leap to hear his  
words,  
As though it had with holy fire been  
touched!

Dost note the slanting shadows? 'Tis  
the hour  
Of evening sacrifice, by the old law  
Appointed.

HEZRON.

True! a strange coincidence!

ZABDIEL.

And dost thou note the man of God his  
face  
Studious averteth from the sun, to teach  
The crowd, the god they worship is not  
his?

HEZRON.

And see! he stretcheth forth his hands  
to pray.  
Believest thou that fire will fall from  
heaven?

ZABDIEL.

If there's a God in Israel, it will.

ELIJAH.

O Thou Most High Jehovah, cov'nant  
God  
Of Holy Abraham, Isaac, Israel!  
The hour hath come for thee to pluck  
thine hand

From out thy bosom, and to bare thine  
arm

In sight of all the people. Let them  
know

That thou art Israel's God, worthy alone  
Of praise and worship, working in the  
heavens

As pleases thee, and ruling over all.  
Approve me as thy servant, and make  
known

That all that I have done was at thy  
word,



And not of mine own counsel. Hear me,  
 Lord,  
 O hear! and answer by a sign of dread.  
 As thou didst Aaron, Gideon, David;  
 hear;  
 That they may know thou art Jehovah-  
 God,  
 For thy name jealous, yet most merciful.

HEZRON.

See! see! the fire from heaven! from the  
 clear sky  
 The flash descends—the altar's in a  
 blaze—  
 The sacrifice is hid in smoke—the wood,  
 The stones, the very dust, are all con-  
 sumed,  
 All melted in one mass of blood-red  
 flame—  
 Ne'er for such purpose to be used again.  
 And see! the water hissing in the trench,  
 The fire hath licked it up, to vapor  
 turned.

ELIJAH.

Down on your faces, O ye people, fall,  
 And own your God! the great Jehovah  
 own!

ALL.

Behold a miracle! a miracle!  
 Jehovah is the God, the God alone;  
 Jehovah is the true and living God.  
 No more we worship idols, but our backs  
 We turn on Baal, and the Lord adore.

ELIJAH.

Now if ye from your idols truly turn,  
 And will be zealous for the Lord of  
 Hosts,  
 Seize the false priests of Baal, let none  
 flee!  
 So is it written in the law, "If one,  
 Although he be thy bosom-friend, and  
 dear  
 As thine own soul, should sily thee en-  
 tice  
 To follow other gods, thou shalt not  
 spare,  
 Nor shall thine eye have pity. He shall  
 die,  
 For that he thrust thee from the Lord  
 away  
 Who brought thee from the land of  
 bondage." Hence!

Away with the idolatrous, foul brood,  
 To Kishon's brook, and slay them there.  
 The waves  
 Shall wash the land forever of this  
 plague.

JEZEBEL.

Wilt thou, O king, permit this massacre  
 Of a whole priestly tribe, before thine  
 eyes?

AHAB.

I cannot interfere. Such was the pact,  
 Such the conditions I myself imposed,  
 "Failure, to either party fatal proves."

ZEPHON.

It may be weakness, but such bloody  
 scenes  
 Are to my feelings most repugnant.  
 Truth  
 Requires not, sure, such questionable  
 aids.  
 Not words of thunder, nor rebukes of  
 fire,  
 Not earthquake throes, nor elemental  
 war,  
 But gentle ministries of patient love,  
 Subdue the heart, and melt its flint to  
 tears.

OBADIAH.

The fickle people and the court, I know  
 Better than those who in seclusion live,  
 And premature this exultation deem.  
 Sudden reforms, unbased on principle,  
 Lack root and permanence. Reaction  
 comes;  
 The cloud exhales before the first hot  
 sun;  
 The unfed torrent dies out in the sand;  
 Discouragement ensues, despair and fear.  
 Stunned by the failure and the total  
 wreck,  
 Ev'n prophets, for they are but men, may  
 yield  
 The hopeless cause, and to the desert  
 flee.

ELIJAH.

In the faint rustle of the leaves, O  
 king!  
 I hear the token of returning grace;  
 Now get thee up, to thy pavilion hie,  
 And with unwonted gladness spread the  
 feast.



I give myself to prayer. Thou, Zephon!  
 climb  
 Yon rising ground, and bring me sure  
 report  
 What thou discernest on the rough'ning  
 sea.  
 God of my fathers! let me with thee  
 plead;  
 Appear for thine own name; thy word  
 fulfil;  
 Nor leave thy cause to deep reproach  
 and shame!

ZEPHON.

No pleasing change I mark: the brazen  
 sky  
 Glows with unshaded and relentless  
 glare.

ELIJAH.

Seven times return again, and watch un-  
 tired.  
 O gracious King of Heaven! shall the  
 bold mocks  
 Of heathen scoffers now insult mine ear,  
 While they profanely cry, "Where is thy  
 God?  
 Not for mine honor, Lord! but thy great  
 name,  
 Reveal thine arm, and teach the godless  
 world,  
 'Tis Thou alone, not Gentile vanities,  
 That rain dost give, from out thy treas-  
 ure-cloud.

ZEPHON.

Seven times mine eye hath the far sea-  
 line swept,  
 Since thou hast here bowed motionless,  
 thine head  
 Deep-buried in thine hands; and now  
 at length  
 Out of the sea ascends a little cloud  
 In form and bigness like a human hand.

ELIJAH.

I thank thee, God of prayer! On rapid  
 wing  
 Expanding, 'twill o'er canopy the heav-  
 ens,  
 And burst with sudden and resistless  
 force  
 In an impetuous deluge on the plain.

My lord, O king! thy chariot prepare,  
 That the swift-coming tempest stay thee  
 not;  
 Whiles that thy servant, girding up his  
 loins,  
 Will run before thee to thy palace-gate.

Welcome, thrice welcome, to the thirsty  
 fields,  
 The genial gift of Him who answers  
 prayer!  
 Praise to the King of Glory! who doth  
 give  
 Unto his saints a two-edged sword, his  
 wrath  
 To execute upon the heathen, and to  
 bind  
 In chains the rebels that oppose his will.  
 Sons of the prophets! lead the swelling  
 strain,  
 For this should be a joyful day to you.

#### CHORUS OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS

##### I.

Laud, blessing, adoration, are thy right,  
 Great King of boundless majesty!  
 Thy mantle is the living light;  
 Thou fillest heaven's high throne,  
 And sway'st the sceptre of the skies  
 alone:  
 Among the gods none dares to rival  
 thee.

##### II.

Thou madest heaven and earth,  
 The hoarse waves echo back thine  
 awful name;  
 Thou wast, before the mountains had  
 their birth,  
 Before the pillars of old Nature's  
 frame.

##### III.

The flaming sun  
 Thy glory, not his own, reveals;  
 As on his swift but silent wheels,  
 Along the constellated arch,  
 With giant step, and conqueror's  
 march,  
 He slackens not the rein, until his goal  
 be won.

## IV.

Rising, setting,  
 Ne'er forgetting  
 The place to which he, panting, must  
 return;  
 Thy guiding will  
 He hastens to fulfill,  
 Which formed him first, and bade his  
 splendors burn.

## V.

The thunder is thy voice; and thine,  
 O God!  
 The lightning's terrible beauty, gleaming  
 far;  
 When thou dost yoke the whirlwind to  
 thy car,  
 And ride upon the wings of storms  
 abroad.

## VI.

O'er the Great Sea resounds the deafen-  
 ing roar,  
 The range of Lebanon it rolleth o'er,  
 And Sirion at its terrific peals.  
 Flash after flash the forest-depths re-  
 veals,  
 Shivers the lofty cedars with its stroke,  
 And of its foliage strips the giant oak.  
 Rent is the black and overhanging pall,  
 And welcome torrents on the valleys  
 fall.

## VII.

What are idols, false and vain?  
 Lust and blood are in their train;  
 Sightless eyes and helpless hands;  
 None his votary understands;  
 Weak to bless, and weak to ban,  
 Senseless god, and senseless man!

## VIII.

Our God is in the heavens: He guides  
 The starry paths, the ocean tides;  
 Nothing too great, nothing too small!  
 His equal eye is over all;  
 Dropping with gold the insect's wing,  
 Or widest empires managing.  
 The callow raven's cry he hears,  
 And champion of the poor appears.

## IX.

They that persecute the just  
 Touch the apple of his eye;  
 His terrors make the oppressor fly,  
 And beat the wicked small as dust.  
 Though hand in hand,  
 The wicked band,  
 His people to exterminate;  
 For Israel's sighs  
 He will arise,  
 Their righteous cause to vindicate.  
 Asunder cut the impious cords,  
 God of gods, and Lord of lords!

## X.

Praise Him in the highest height,  
 Lucid orbs of quenchless light!  
 Praise Him in the depths below,  
 Lightning's flash, and winter's snow!  
 Praise Him, mountains gray and tall;  
 Torrents, that in thunder fall!  
 Birds, whose song the morning wakes;  
 Beasts, whose roar the forest shakes!  
 Praise Him, ye of mortal race,  
 Sharers of his sevenfold grace;  
 Gifts of mercy, deeds of power,  
 Witnessed by each grateful hour!  
 Praise Him, princes on the throne;  
 Praise Him, tribes of every zone!  
 Join, O Earth! thy loftiest hymn  
 To the chant of Cherubim!

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

ROBERT DAVIDSON  
 [Published New York, 1860]



# ATHALIAH





# ATHALIAH

## CHARACTERS.

JOASH, *King of Judah and Son of Ahaziah.*

ATHALIAH, *Widow of Joram, and Grandmother of Joash.*

JEHOSHEBA, *Aunt of Joash, and Wife of the High Priest.*

ZACHARIAH, *Son of Jehoiada and Jehosheba.*

SALOME, *Sister of Zachariah.*

ABNER, *one of the Chief Officers of the Kings of Judah.*

AZARIAH, ISHMAEL, and the three other *Chiefs of the Priests and Levites.*

MATTAN, *an Apostate priest; Chief Priest of Baal.*

NABAL, *confidential Friend of Mattan.*

HAGAR, *an Attendant of Athaliah.*

*Band of Priests and Levites.*

*Attendants of Athaliah.*

*Nurse of Joash.*

*Chorus of Young Maidens of the Tribe of Levi.*

*The scene is laid in the Temple at Jerusalem, in an ante-chamber of the High Priest's dwelling.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

JEHOIADA AND ABNER.

ABNER.

Yea, to the Temple of the Lord I come,  
To worship with the solemn rites of old,  
To celebrate with thee the famous day  
When from the holy mount our Law  
was giv'n.

How times are changed! Soon as the  
sacred trump

With joyous blast announced this day's  
return,

The Temple porticoes, with garlands gay,  
Could not contain the crowds of the  
devout;

Before the altar all in order due,  
Bringing the earliest harvest of their  
fields,

Offered those firstfruits to the Lord  
of all;

Nor were there priests enough for sac-  
rifice.

A woman's will has dared to check these  
throngs,

And turn'd the day's bright glory into  
gloom.

Scarce dare a few most zealous wor-  
shippers

Recall for us some shadow of the past;  
The rest are all forgetful of their God,

Or, e'en to Baal's altars flocking now,  
In shameful orgies learn to bear their  
part,

And curse the Name on which their  
fathers call'd.

My soul is troubled,—naught will I  
conceal—

Lest Athaliah visit upon thee

Her vengeance, spurn all remnant of  
respect,

And tear thee from the altar of the Lord.

JEHOIADA.

Whence comes to thee this presage  
dark to-day?

ABNER.

Holy and righteous, how canst thou  
escape?

Long has she hated that rare constancy  
Which adds new brilliance to thy mitred  
brow;

Long has she treated thy religious zeal  
As obstinate sedition and revolt.

The shining virtues of thy faithful spouse

Have earned the special hatred of the Queen.

If Aaron's priesthood has devolved on thee,

Thy wife is sister to our latest king.  
Mattan moreover, that apostate priest,  
His foul desertion from our altars crowns

With eager persecution of all good,  
And, worse than Athaliah, spurs her on.  
'Tis not enough that in a foreign garb  
The Levite serves at Baal's altar now,  
This Temple is to him a sore offence,  
And he would fain destroy the God he left.

No means he leaves untried to ruin thee,  
And undermines with praise no less than blame.

He feigns for thee a treacherous kindness,

Masking the blackness of his venom thus.

Sometimes he prompts the Queen to dread thy power,

And sometimes, looking to her lust for gold,

Pretends that somewhere known to thee alone,

Thou hidest treasures David had amass'd.  
For two days past the proud imperious queen

Has seem'd as though consumed by baffled spite.

I saw her yesterday with furious eyes  
Glare at this sacred place, and mark'd her well,

As if within the Temple's deep recess  
Lurk'd God's avenger arm'd to punish her.

The more I think thereon, the less I doubt

On thee her wrath is ready now to burst,  
And that, with all her mother's thirst for blood,

E'en in His shrines she will defy our God.

JEHOIADA.

He who enchains the fury of the waves  
Knows how to curb the plots of wicked men.

Submitting humbly to His holy will,  
I fear my God, and know no other fear.  
And yet, I thank thee, Abner, for thy zeal

That o'er my peril keeps a watchful eye.  
I see injustice chafes thine inmost heart,  
Thou art a faithful son of Israel still.  
For that may Heaven be bless'd! But

secret wrath  
And passive worth, art thou content with these?

Is faith sincere, if it declines to act?  
An impious foreigner for eight long years

Has David's throne usurp'd with all its rights,

Unpunish'd waded in our princes' blood,  
Foul murderess of the children of her son,

And e'en against our God has raised her arm.

And thou, a pillar of this trembling state,  
Bred in the camp of good Jehoshaphat  
Under his son Jehoram in command,  
On whom alone our towns in terror lean'd

When Ahaziah's unexpected death  
Scatter'd his armies before Jehu's face,  
Say'st thou—"I fear the Lord and own His truth!"

Lo, by my mouth to thee the Lord replies,—

"What boots it that thou boast zeal for My Law?

Thinkest to honor Me by barren vows?  
What fruit have I of all thy sacrifice?

Need I the blood of heifers and of goats?

Thy princes' blood cries out, and is not heard.

Break, break all compact with impiety,  
Root up the crimes amidst My people rife,

And come and sacrifice thy victims then."

ABNER.

What can I do? The people have lost heart,

Judah is cow'd, and Benjamin is weak;  
The day that saw their royal line extinct  
Extinguish'd all their ancient valor too.  
The Lord Himself, they say, withdraws from us,

Tho' once so jealous of His people's praise;

He sees unmoved their majesty abased,  
And His compassion is at last worn out.  
No more for us His mighty arm outstretch'd

With countless marvels terrifies our  
foes;  
His Ark is dumb,—utters no oracle.

JEHOIADA.

Yet when did miracles abound as now?  
When by more signs has God displayed  
His power?

Will ye have always eyes that cannot  
see,

Ungrateful people? Shall His mightiest  
deeds

Strike on your ears, nor ever move  
your hearts?

Say, my dear Abner, must I needs repeat  
The wonders brought to pass in these  
our days;

The signal fall of Israel's tyrant kings,  
And God found faithful to perform His  
threats;

Ahab destroyed, and with his blood  
defiled

The plot of land which murder had  
usurped;

Hard by that fatal field Jezebel slain,  
A queen down trampled under horse's  
hoofs,

The dogs that licked up her inhuman  
blood,

The mangled limbs of her dishonored  
corpse;

The troop of lying prophets brought to  
shame,

The fire from heav'n that on the altar  
fell;

Elijah's voice ruling the elements,

The skies thereby shut up, the earth  
like brass,

For three whole years left without rain  
or dew;

The dead arising at Elisha's word?

Recall, O Abner, these portentous signs,  
God is to-day as He has always been,

He can unfold His glory when He will,

And ever in His mind His people dwell.

ABNER.

But where the promises so often made  
To David and to Solomon his son?

Alas! We hoped that from their fruit-  
ful stock

Kings were to issue in a numerous  
train;

That over every nation, tribe, and tongue  
One of their lineage should extend his  
sway,

Should everywhere make war and strife  
to cease,

And at his footstool see earth's proudest  
kings.

JEHOIADA.

And why distrust the promises of  
Heaven?

ABNER.

That son of David, where shall he be  
found?

Can Heav'n itself restore the living sap  
Of that dry tree, now withered at the  
root?

E'en in his cradle Athaliah slew

The babe, and eight years after can he  
live?

Ah! might it be her fury missed its aim,  
That of our royal blood some drop  
escaped—

JEHOIADA.

What would'st thou do?

ABNER.

O happy day for me!

How gladly would I go to meet my  
king!

Doubt not that to his feet our eager  
tribes,—

But wherefore mock me with these idle  
dreams?

Ill-fated heir of our victorious kings,

We had but Ahaziah, with his sons;

By Jehu's darts I saw the father slain,

And thou his sons by his own mother  
murdered.

JEHOIADA.

I cannot now explain; but when the sun  
Shall the third portion of his course  
complete,

Bringing the morning hour that bids to  
prayer,

Hither return and with the self-same  
zeal.

Then God may prove to thee by gracious  
deeds

His word is faithful still, and never  
fails.

So, for this solemn day I must prepare  
And dawn already gilds the temple roof.

ABNER.

What gracious deed is this, to me un-  
known?

Tow'rd thee Jehosheba directs her steps;  
I leave thee, and will join the faithful  
band

Brought hither by this solemn festival.

SCENE II.

JEHOIADA AND JEHOSEBA.

JEHOIADA.

Princess, the time is come for us to  
speak,

Thy happy theft can be no longer hid.

The insults of the enemies of God,  
Abusing this our silence, have too long  
Charged with unfaithfulness His prom-  
ises.

Nay more; success has animated rage,  
And Athaliah would to Baal burn,  
E'en in God's courts, incense idolatrous.  
Reared in His Temple 'neath the  
Almighty's wing,

'Tis ours to show the King thine hands  
have saved.

He'll prove himself courageous as his  
sires,

Already in his wit beyond his age.

Ere I unfold his wondrous destiny,

I offer him to God by Whom kings  
reign;

Then, gathering straight our Levites and  
our priests,

I will proclaim their master's long lost  
heir.

JEHOSEBA.

Knows he his name and noble fortune  
yet?

JEHOIADA.

He owns no other than Eliakim,

And thinks himself some foundling left  
to die,

Whom I in pity treated as my son.

JEHOSEBA.

Ah! from what perils I delivered him!  
What danger is he now to meet once  
more!

JEHOIADA.

What! Fails thy faith already in alarm?

JEHOSEBA.

My lord, I yield me to thy counsels wise.  
Since first I snatched this precious babe  
from death,

I placed his welfare in thy careful  
hands;

Yea, dreading e'en the fervor of my  
love,

I shun his presence where and when I  
can,

For fear lest my unguarded heart betray

My secret with the tears I cannot check.

Three days and nights I thought that  
duty bade

Devote to weeping and impassioned  
prayer.

Yet may it be allowed me now to ask,  
What friends thou hast ready to take  
thy side?

Abner, brave Abner, will he lend his  
aid?

Say, has he sworn to stand beside his  
King?

JEHOIADA.

Abner, though on his faith we may  
rely,

Knows not as yet that any King is ours.

JEHOSEBA.

Who is to guard young Joash? Wilt  
thou trust

Obed or Amnon with so high a charge?

My father's kindness they have often  
proved,—

JEHOIADA.

And sold themselves to Athaliah's will.

JEHOSEBA.

Whom to her hirelings wilt thou then  
oppose?

JEHOIADA.

Have I not said? Our Levites and our  
priests.

JEHOSHEBA.

I know that, secretly assembled near,  
Their numbers have been doubled by  
thy care;

That full of love for thee, horror for  
her,

A great oath binds them, ere the trial  
come,

To David's heir when he shall be re-  
vealed.

But though with loyal ardour they may  
burn,

Can they unaided vindicate their king?

Is zeal enough to cope with such a task?  
Doubt not the Queen, when the first  
rumour spreads

Of Ahaziah's son in hiding here,  
Will gather all her savage troops around,  
Besiege the Temple, and break down  
its gates.

Against such foes will sanctity avail,  
And holy hands raised to the Lord in  
prayer?

Their province is to intercede for guilt,  
No blood but that of victims have they  
shed;

Joash, perchance, sore wounded in their  
arms,—

JEHOIADA.

Countest as naught the God who fights  
for us?

God, who protects the orphan's inno-  
cence,

And e'en in weakness manifests His  
might;

God, who hates tyrants, and in Jezreel  
swore

He would root out Ahab and Jezebel;  
Who, striking Joram, husband of their  
child,

And Joram's son, their family pursued;  
Whose threatening arm, though for a  
time withheld,

Over that impious race is ever stretched?

JEHOSHEBA.

Yea, 'tis His righteous sentence on  
them all

That makes me tremble for my brother's  
son.

Who knows if he, inheriting their guilt,  
Was not at birth condemn'd to share  
their fate?

Or whether God exempts him from the  
curse,

And will for David's sake his pardon  
seal?

Ah! his sad state when Heaven gave  
him me

Returns each moment to alarm my soul.  
With slaughter'd princes was the cham-  
ber full;

Dagger in hand, th' inexorable Queen  
To bloodshed urged her barbarous sol-  
diery,

And eagerly her murderous course pur-  
sued!

Young Joash, left for dead, there met  
my eyes;

I seem to see his terror-stricken nurse  
Still vainly crouching at the assassin's  
feet,

His drooping form clasp'd to her feeble  
breast.

I took him stain'd with blood. Bathing  
his face

My copious tears restored his vanish'd  
sense;

And, whether yet with fear or fond  
caress,

I felt the pressure of his tender arms.  
Great God, forbid my love should be his  
bane,

Last relic of the faithful David now.

Bred in Thine House, and taught to  
love Thy Law,

He knows no other Father than Thyself.

If, ready to attack a murderous Queen,  
Faith falters trembling at the danger  
nigh;

If flesh and blood, disquieted this day,  
Have shed too many tears, alarm'd for  
him;

Heir of Thy holy promise, guard him  
well,

And for such weakness punish only me!

JEHOIADA.

Thy tears, Jehosheba, no blame deserve,  
But God would have us trust Him as a  
Father.

He visits not with blind resentment sins  
Of impious ancestors on pious sons.



All that remains of faithful Israel still  
Will come to-day here to renew their  
vows,

Deep as their reverence for David's race,  
They hold abhorr'd the child of Jezebel;  
Joash will move them with his modest  
grace,

Seeming to light anew the glorious past;  
And the Lord's Voice, making our cause  
His own,

Will in His Temple to their hearts  
appeal.

Two faithless kings in turn have Him  
defied,

Now must a monarch to the throne be  
raised

Whose grateful memory shall bless the  
day

When God by His own priests his rights  
restored,

Who pluck'd him from th' oblivion of  
the tomb,

And David's lamp rekindled when put  
out.

Great God, if Thy foreknowledge sees  
him base,

Bent to forsake the paths that David  
trod,

Then let him be like fruit ere ripeness  
pluck'd

Or flower wither'd by a noisome blast!  
But if this child, obedient to Thy will,

Is destined to advance Thy wise de-  
signs,

Now let the rightful heir the sceptre  
sway,

Give to my feeble hands his pow'rful  
foes,

And baffle in her plots a cruel Queen.

Vouchsafe, my God, on Nathan and on  
her

That spirit of blind foolishness to pour  
Which leads deluded monarchs to their  
fall!

No more; farewell. Our children with  
them bring

Maidens, of holiest stock the hallow'd  
seed.

## SCENE III.

JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME,  
CHORUS.

JEHOSHEBA.

Dear Zachariah, go, nor stay thy steps,  
Accompany thy venerable sire.

Daughters of Levi, young and faithful  
band,

Whom with His zeal the Lord already  
fires,

Who come so often here to share my  
sighs,

Children, my only joy in griefs pro-  
found;

These gay festoons and coronets of  
flow'rs

Once well accorded with our stately  
feasts,

But now, alas, when shame and sorrow  
reign,

What offering is more fit than one of  
tears!

Already do I hear the solemn trump,  
Soon will the Temple doors be opened  
wide,

While thither I myself prepare to go,  
Sing, praise the God whose presence here  
ye seek.

## SCENE IV.

THE CHORUS.

ALL THE CHORUS SINGS.

His glory fills the universe sublime,  
Lift to this God for aye the voice of  
prayer!

He reign'd supreme before the birth of  
Time;

Sing of His loving care.

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

Vainly unrighteous force  
Would still His people's praise that  
must have course;

His Name shall perish ne'er.

Day tells to day His pow'r, from time  
to time;

His glory fills the universe sublime;  
Sing of His loving care.

ALL THE CHORUS REPEATS.

His glory fills the universe sublime;  
Sing of His loving care.

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

He paints the flow'rs with all their  
lovely hues;  
The fruit to ripeness grows,  
For daily He bestows  
The day's warm sunshine, and the  
night's cool dews,  
Nor does the grateful earth t' o'erpay  
the debt refuse.

ANOTHER VOICE.

The sun at His command spreads joy  
around,  
'Tis from His bounteous hand  
its light proceeds;  
But in His Law, so pure, so holy found,  
We hail His richest gift to  
meet our needs.

ANOTHER.

Oh! mount of Sinai, let the memory  
stay  
Of that for ever great and famous day,  
When on thy flaming head,  
In clouds conceal'd, the Lord reveal'd  
To mortal eyes a ray from His own  
glory shed.  
Tell us, why glow'd those lightning fires  
up there,  
Why roll'd the smoke, why peal'd in  
troubled air  
Thunder and trumpet's blare?  
Came He that, back to primal Chaos  
hurl'd,  
On its foundations of past ages whirl'd,  
Came He to shake the world?

ANOTHER.

He came that He to Israel might reveal  
Th' immortal lustre of His holy Law;  
He came that to their hearts He might  
appeal,  
To claim their lasting love, based upon  
reverent awe.

ALL THE CHORUS.

O Law divine and full of grace!  
Justice and goodness all supreme!  
What reason and what joy extreme,

Our love and trust in such a God to  
place!

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

From slavery's yoke He did our fathers  
save,  
And for their desert-food sweet manna  
gave;  
To us He gives His Laws, all gifts  
above  
Save of Himself; for all He only claims  
our love.

THE CHORUS.

Justice and goodness all supreme!

THE SAME VOICE.

For them divided He the waters of the  
sea,  
From the dry rock He made the tor-  
rent stream;  
To us He gives His Laws, all gifts  
above  
Save of Himself, for all He only claims  
our love.

THE CHORUS.

O Law divine and full of grace!  
What reason, and what joy extreme,  
Our love and trust in such a God to  
place!

ANOTHER VOICE (*alone*).

You who can only know a servile fear,  
Whose thankless souls God's goodness  
fails to move;  
Does it to you so hard a task appear,  
So difficult to love?  
Slaves dread the tyrant's lash that  
makes them smart,  
But children feel a love that binds the  
heart;  
To share God's lavish bounty you are  
fain,  
But not to love again!

ALL THE CHORUS.

O Law divine and full of grace!  
Justice and goodness all supreme!  
What reason and what joy extreme,  
Our love and trust in such a God to  
place!

## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

JEHOSHEBA, SALOME, CHORUS.

JEHOSHEBA.

Maidens, it is enough; your songs must  
cease;

'Tis time for us to join the public  
prayers.

The hour is come to celebrate the feast,  
And in our turn before the Lord appear.

## SCENE II.

JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME AND  
CHORUS.

JEHOSHEBA.

What do I see? My son, what brings  
thee back?

So pale and breathless, whither dost  
thou run?

ZACHARIAH.

Mother!

JEHOSHEBA.

Speak, then!

ZACHARIAH.

The Temple is profaned!

JEHOSHEBA.

What?

ZACHARIAH.

And the altar of the Lord forsaken!

JEHOSHEBA.

I tremble. Quickly tell thy mother all.

ZACHARIAH.

My father, the High Priest, with all  
due rites

Presented to the Lord, Who feeds man-  
kind,

The first loaves of the harvest we have  
reap'd,

And then, while offering with blood-  
stain'd hands

The smoking inwards of the victims  
slain;

And, standing by his side, Eliakim  
Help'd me to serve him, clad in linen  
stole;

While with the blood of sacrifice the  
priests

Sprinkled the altar and the worshipers;  
There rose a tumult, and the people

turn'd,  
Sudden astonishment in every eye.

A woman—is to name her blasphemy?—  
A woman—it was Athaliah's self.

JEHOSHEBA.

Great Heav'n!

ZACHARIAH.

Within the court reserved for men  
This woman enters with uplifted brow,  
Yea, and attempts to pass the limit set,  
Where none but Levites have a right  
to come.

The people fly, all scatter'd in dismay;  
My father—ah, what wrath blazed from  
his eyes!

Moses to Pharaoh seem'd less terrible,—  
"Go, Queen," my father said, "and leave  
this place,

Bann'd to thy sex and thine impiety!  
Comest to brave the majesty of God?"  
And then the Queen, fiercely confronting  
him,

Seem'd as in act to utter blasphemies;  
I know not if the Angel of the Lord  
Appear'd before her with a glittering  
sword,

But straight her tongue seem'd frozen  
in her mouth

And all her boldness utterly abash'd;  
She could not move her eyes, in terror  
fix'd

And strange surprise on young Eliakim.

JEHOSHEBA.

What! Did he stand there in her very  
sight?

ZACHARIAH.

We both stood gazing on that cruel  
Queen,

Stricken with equal horror at our hearts;  
But soon the priests encompass'd us  
    around,  
And forced us to withdraw. I came to  
    thee,  
To tell thee the outrage done; I know no  
    more.

JEHOSHEBA.

Ah! she would doubtless tear him from  
    our arms.  
E'en at God's altar hunting for her prey.  
Perchance, ere now, this child of many  
    tears—  
O God, remember David, see and save!

SALOME.

Who is he, thus to cause your tears to  
    flow?

ZACHARIAH.

Why should his life be threaten'd? Can  
    it be?

SALOME.

What can the boy have done to enrage  
    the Queen?

ZACHARIAH.

What fear they from a helpless orphan  
    child?

JEHOSHEBA.

She comes! She must not see us, let  
    us go.

SCENE III.

ATHALIAH, ABNER, HAGAR, ATTENDANTS  
    OF ATHALIAH.

HAGAR.

Madam, why stay in such a place as this,  
Where every sight offends and wounds  
    thine eye?  
Leave to the priests this temple where  
    they dwell;  
Fly from this scene of tumult; and  
    within  
Thy palace, lull each troubled sense to  
    rest.

ATHALIAH.

I cannot. Thou dost see me vex'd and  
    weak.  
Go thou, send word to Mattan that he  
    come  
With haste: oh! happy still, if by his aid  
I find that peace I seek, and seek in vain!  
    (*She seats herself.*)

SCENE IV.

ATHALIAH, ABNER, ATTENDANTS OF  
    ATHALIAH.

ABNER.

Madam, forgive me if I dare defend  
    him,  
His zeal should not surprise you. For  
    the God,  
Whom we adore, Himself ordain'd it so,  
And gave us charge to guard His altar  
    well;  
The work of sacrifice to Aaron's sons,  
And to the Levites place and task  
    assign'd;  
To their descendants strictly He forbade  
All fellowship with other deities.  
Art thou the wife\* and mother of our  
    kings,  
A stranger to our customs on this point?  
Dost thou not know our laws? And  
    must to-day—  
But Mattan comes: with him I leave  
    thee now.

ATHALIAH.

We need thy presence, Abner. Let it  
    pass,  
Jehoiada's presumptuous insolence,  
With all that heap of superstitions vain  
Which bid you keep your Temple to  
    yourselves:  
A subject far more urgent wakes alarm.  
I know that from a child, rear'd in the  
    camp,  
Abner is generous, knowing how to pay  
Alike to God and King the debt he owes.  
Remain.

\* *Racine* has "fille" (daughter) by an  
oversight.

## SCENE V.

ATHALIAH, ABNER, MATTAN, ATTEND-  
ANTS OF ATHALIAH.

MATTAN.

Great Queen, is this a place for thee?  
What trouble stirs, what terror chills  
thine heart?  
What dost thou in the midst of enemies?  
Darest thou this unhallowed fane ap-  
proach?  
Hast thou that bitter hatred cast away—

ATHALIAH.

Both of you lend me an attentive ear.  
I do not wish now to recall the past,  
Nor give account to you for blood I  
shed:

A sense of duty prompted all my acts.  
Nor will I take for judge a hasty crowd;  
Whate'er they may presume to spread  
abroad,

My vindication Heav'n has made its  
care.

My pow'r, establish'd on renown'd suc-  
cess,

Has magnified my name from sea to sea;  
Jerusalem enjoys profoundest peace;  
The wandering Arab Jordan sees no  
more

Ravage his borders with continual raids;  
Nor boasts Philistia over Judah now,  
And Syria owns me for a sister Queen.

Lastly the traitor, who destroy'd my  
House,

And e'en to me thought to extend his  
rage,

Jehu, fierce Jehu, in Samaria quails  
Before a mighty rival's rapid strokes,  
Whom I incited to attack my foe;  
And thus th' assassin leaves me mistress  
here,

To reap the fruits of policy in peace.

But for some days a gnawing care has  
come,

To check the flood of my prosperity.

A dream (why should a dream disquiet  
me?)

Preys on my heart, and keeps it ill at  
ease;

I try to banish it; it haunts me still.

'Twas deepest night, when horror falls  
on man,

My mother Jezebel before me stood,  
Richly attired as on the day she died,  
Her pride undaunted by misfortune's  
touch.

That borrow'd brightness still her fea-  
tures wore,

Which she would paint upon her wither'd  
face,

To hide the ravages of ruthless age:

"Tremble," she said, "child worthy of  
myself;

O'er thee too triumphs Judah's cruel  
God,

And thou must fall into his dreadful  
hands,

Whereat I grieve." With these alarming  
words,

Her spectre o'er my bed appear'd to  
bend;

I stretch'd my hands to clasp her; but I  
found

Only a hideous mass of flesh and bones,  
Horribly bruised and mangled, dragg'd  
thro' mire,

Bleeding and torn, whose limbs the dogs  
of prey

Were growling over with devouring  
greed.

ABNER.

Great God!

ATHALIAH.

While thus disturb'd, before me rose  
The vision of a boy in shining robe,  
Such as the Hebrew priests are wont to  
wear.

My drooping spirits at his sight revived;  
But while my troubled eyes, to peace

restored,  
Admired his noble air and modest grace,

I felt the sudden stroke of murderous  
steel

Plunged deeply by the traitor in my  
breast.

Perhaps to you this dream, so strangely  
mix'd,

May seem a work of chance, and I my-  
self,

For long ashamed to let my fears prevail;  
Referr'd it to a melancholy mood;

But while its memory linger'd in my  
soul,

Twice in my sleep I saw that form  
again,



Twice the same child before my eyes  
appear'd,

Always about to stab me to the heart.

Worn out at last by horror's close  
pursuit,

I went to claim Baal's protecting care,  
And, kneeling at his altars, find repose.  
How strangely fear may sway our  
mortal minds!

And instinct seem'd to drive me to these  
courts,

To pacify the god whom Jews adore;  
I thought that offerings might appease  
his wrath,

That this their god might grow more  
merciful.

Baal's High Priest, my feebleness for-  
give!

I enter'd; and the sacrifice was stay'd,  
The people fled, Jehoiada in wrath

Advanced to meet me. As he spake, I  
saw

With terror and surprise that self-same  
boy

Who haunts me in my dreams. I saw  
him there;

His mien the same, the same his linen  
stole,

His gait, his eyes, each feature of his  
face;

It was himself; beside th' High Priest  
he walk'd,

Till quickly they removed him from my  
sight.

That is the trouble which detains me  
here,

And thereon would I fain consult you  
both.

Mattan, what means this omen marvel-  
lous?

MATTAN.

Coincidence so strange fills me with  
dread.

ATHALIAH.

But, Abner, hast thou seen this fatal  
child?

Who is he? What his family, his tribe?

ABNER.

Two children at the altar lend their aid,  
One is the High Priest's son, the other  
is

To me unknown.

MATTAN.

Why hesitate to act?

Your Majesty must needs secure them  
both.

'Tis known how I regard Jehoiada,  
Seeking no vengeance for my private  
wrongs,

In all my warnings studying to be fair;  
But, after all, were this indeed his son,  
Would he one moment let the guilty  
live?

ABNER.

Of what crime can a child be capable?

MATTAN.

Heav'n show'd him with a dagger in his  
hand;

And Heav'n is just and wise, nor works  
in vain.

What more dost want?

ABNER.

But, trusting to a dream

Say, would'st thou have us bathe in  
infant blood?

Ye know not yet his father nor his  
name.

MATTAN.

Enough for fear! I have considered all.  
If from illustrious parentage he springs,

His ruin should be hasten'd by his rank;  
If fate has placed him in a lot obscure,

What matters it if worthless blood be  
spilt?

Must kings keep pace when justice lags  
behind?

On promptitude their safety oft depends;  
No irksome scruples need their freedom  
check;

To be suspected is all one with guilt.

ABNER.

Mattan! Is this the language of a  
priest?

Nursed in the lap of war, in carnage  
reared,

Stern agent of the vengeful wrath of  
Kings,

'Tis I who now must urge misfortune's  
plea!

And thou, who owest him a father's  
love,



A minister of peace in times of wrath,  
Cloaking resentment with pretended zeal  
Dost chafe that blood should flow so  
tardily!

Thou badest me, Madam, speak my  
honest thought:

What, then, is this that moves thy fear  
so much?

A dream, a feeble child, whom, it may  
be

Too readily thy fancy recognized.

ATHALIAH.

Abner, I will admit I may be wrong,  
Heeding too much, perchance, an idle  
dream,

More closely then must I behold that  
child,

And at my leisure scan his features well.  
Let both the boys be brought before me  
now.

ABNER.

I fear—

ATHALIAH.

What! Can they fail to grant me this?  
What reason could they have to say  
me no?

'Twould rouse suspicion. Bid Jehosheba,  
Or else her husband bring the children  
here;

I can at pleasure use a monarch's tone.  
Abner, I tell thee candidly, your priests  
Have cause to bless my kindness hither-  
to;

I know how far they freely have  
discuss'd

My conduct, and abused my sovereign  
power;

And yet they live, and yet their temple  
stands.

But soon, I feel, the limit may be pass'd.  
Jehoiada must curb his savage zeal,  
And not provoke my wrath a second  
time.

Go.

SCENE VI.

ATHALIAH, MATTAN, ATTENDANTS OF  
ATHALIAH.

MATTAN.

I may now at last in freedom speak,  
And clearly set the truth before thine  
eyes.

A growing monster in this temple lurks;  
A tempest threatens, wait not till it  
breaks.

Ere daylight Abner with th' High Priest  
confer'd;

Thou knowest well his love for David's  
line.

What if Jehoiada should in their ranks  
Foist this young child with whom Heav'n  
threatens thee,

His son or not—

ATHALIAH.

Thou hast unseal'd mine eyes,  
And Heaven's warning vision grows  
distinct.

But I would fain be free from every  
doubt:

Children will readily betray their  
thoughts,

One word will oft disclose some deep  
design.

Let me, dear Mattan, see him, question  
him.

Go thou, meanwhile, and secret orders  
give

That all my Tyrians quickly arm them-  
selves.

SCENE VII.

JOASH, ATHALIAH, JEHOSEBA, ZACH-  
ARIAH, ABNER, SALOME, TWO LEVITES,  
CHORUS, ATTENDANTS OF ATHALIAH.

JEHOSEBA (*to the TWO LEVITES*).

Keep constant watch, ye servants of the  
Lord,

Over these children, precious and be-  
loved.

ABNER (*to JEHOSEBA*).

Take courage, Princess; they shall be  
my charge.

ATHALIAH.

Heav'n's! the more closely I examine  
him,—

'Tis he! And horror seizes me again.

(*Pointing to JOASH*).

Wife of Jehoiada, is this thy son?

JEHOSHEBA.  
He, Madam?

ATHALIAH.  
He.

JEHOSHEBA.  
His mother? No, not I.  
(*pointing to ZACHARIAH.*)  
There is my son.

ATHALIAH (*to JOASH.*)

Who is thy father, child?  
Answer, thyself.

JEHOSHEBA.  
Heav'n till this very day—

ATHALIAH.  
Why in such haste to answer for the  
boy?  
It is for him to speak.

JEHOSHEBA.  
From one so young  
What revelation canst thou hope to gain?

ATHALIAH.  
The young are innocent; and simple  
truth  
Their honest frankness knows not to  
disguise:  
Let him explain all that concerns him-  
self.

JEHOSHEBA (*aside*).  
Great God, put now Thy wisdom in his  
mouth!

ATHALIAH.  
What is thy name?

JOASH.  
My name's Eliakim.

ATHALIAH.  
Thy father?

JOASH.  
Fatherless, they say, I am,  
Cast since my birth upon the arms of  
God;  
I never knew my parents, who they  
were.

ATHALIAH.  
Hast thou no parents?

JOASH.  
They abandon'd me.  
ATHALIAH.

How? and how long ago?  
JOASH.

When I was born.  
ATHALIAH.  
Where is thy home? This can at least  
be told.

JOASH.  
This Temple is my home; none else I  
know.

ATHALIAH.  
Where wast thou found? Hast thou  
been told of that?

JOASH.  
'Midst cruel wolves, ready to eat me up.

ATHALIAH.  
Who placed thee in this temple?

JOASH.  
One unknown,  
She gave no name, nor was she seen  
again.

ATHALIAH.  
Whose guardian hands preserved thine  
infant years?

JOASH.  
When did God e'er neglect His children's  
needs?  
The feather'd nestlings He provides  
with food,  
And o'er all nature spreads His bounty  
wide.  
Daily I pray; and with a Father's care  
He feeds me from the sacred offerings.

ATHALIAH.  
New wonder comes to trouble and  
perplex!

The sweetness of his voice, his infant  
 grace  
 Unconsciously make enmity give way  
 To—can it be compassion that I feel?

ABNER.

Madam, is this thy dreaded enemy?  
 'Tis evident thy dreams have played  
 thee false;  
 Unless thy pity, which now seems to  
 vex,  
 Should be the fatal blow that terrified.

ATHALIAH (*to* JOASH *and* JEHOSEBEA).

Why are ye leaving?

JEHOSEBEA.

Thou hast heard his tale:  
 His presence longer might be trouble-  
 some.

ATHALIAH (*to* JOASH).

Nay, child, come back. What dost thou  
 all the day?

JOASH.

I worship God, and hear His Law ex-  
 plain'd;  
 His holy volume I am taught to read,  
 And now to write it has my hand begun.

ATHALIAH.

What says that Law?

JOASH.

That God requires our love,  
 Avenges, soon or late, His Name blas-  
 phemed,  
 Is the protector of the fatherless,  
 Resists the proud, the murderer pun-  
 ishes.

ATHALIAH.

I understand. But all within these walls,  
 How are they occupied?

JOASH.

In praising God.

ATHALIAH.

Does God claim constant service here  
 and prayer?

JOASH.

All else is banish'd from His holy courts.

ATHALIAH.

What pleasures hast thou?

JOASH.

Where God's altar stands,  
 I sometimes help th' High Priest to  
 offer salt  
 Or incense, hear His lofty praises sung,  
 And see His stately ritual perform'd.

ATHALIAH.

What! Hast thou pastime none more  
 sweet than that?  
 Sad lot for one so young; but come  
 with me,  
 And see my palace and my splendor  
 there.

JOASH.

God's goodness then would from my  
 memory fade.

ATHALIAH.

I would not force thee to forget Him,  
 child.

JOASH.

Thou dost not pray to Him.

ATHALIAH.

But thou shalt pray.

JOASH.

There I should hear another's name in-  
 voked.

ATHALIAH.

I serve my god: and thou shalt worship  
 thine.

There are two powerful gods.

JOASH.

Thou must fear mine;  
 He only is the Lord, and thine is naught.

ATHALIAH.

Pleasures untold will I provide for thee.

JOASH.

The happiness of sinners melts away.

ATHALIAH.

Of sinners, who are they?

JEHOSHEBA.

Madam, excuse

A child—

ATHALIAH.

I like to see how ye have taught him;  
And thou hast pleased me well, Eliakim,  
Being, and that past doubt, no common  
child.

See thou, I am a queen, and have no  
heir;

Forsake this humble service, doff this  
garb,

And I will let thee share in all my  
wealth;

Make trial of my promise from this day;  
Beside me at my table, everywhere,  
Thou shalt receive the treatment of a  
son.

JOASH.

A son!

ATHALIAH.

Yes, speak.

JOASH.

And such a Father leave

For—

ATHALIAH.

Well, what?

JOASH.

Such a mother as thyself!

ATHALIAH (to JEHOSHEBA).

His memory is good; in all he says  
I recognize the lessons ye have given.  
Yes, this is how, corrupting guileless  
youth,

Ye both improve the freedom ye enjoy,  
Inciting them to hatred and wild rage,  
Until they shudder but to hear my name.

JEHOSHEBA.

Can our misfortunes be conceal'd from  
them?

All the world knows them; are they not  
thy boast?

ATHALIAH.

Yea; with just wrath, that I am proud  
to own,

My parents on my offspring I avenged.  
Could I see sire\* and brother massacred,  
My mother from the palace roof cast  
down,

And the same day beheaded all at once  
(Oh, horror!) fourscore † princes of the  
blood:

And all to avenge a pack of prophets  
slain,

Whose dangerous frenzies Jezebel had  
curb'd.

Have queens no hearts, daughters no  
filial love,

That I should act the coward and the  
slave,

Too pitiful to cope with savages,  
By rendering death for death, and blow  
for blow?

David's posterity from me received  
Treatment no worse than had my father's  
sons!

Where should I be to-day, had I not  
quell'd

All weakness and a mother's tenderness,  
Had not this hand of mine like water  
shed

My own heart's blood, and boldly check'd  
your plots?

Your god has vow'd implacable revenge;  
Snapt is the link between thine house  
and mine,

David and all his offspring I abhor,  
Tho' born of mine own blood I own  
them not.

JEHOSHEBA.

Thy plans have prospered. Let God see,  
and judge!

ATHALIAH.

Your god, forsooth, your only refuge  
left,

What will become of his predictions  
now?

Let him present you with that promised  
King,

That Son of David, waited for so long,—  
We meet again. Farewell. I go content.  
I wished to see, and I have seen.

\*Ahab was in reality mortally wounded  
at the battle of Ramoth-Gilead.

(I Kings xxii: 34.)

† Seventy, according to II Kings x, 7.

ABNER (*to JEHOSEBA*).

The trust  
I undertook to keep, I thus resign.

SCENE VIII.

JOASH, JEHOSEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME,  
JEHOIADA, ABNER, LEVITES, THE  
CHORUS.

JEHOSEBA (*to JEHOIADA*).

My lord, did'st hear the Queen's presumptuous words?

JEHOIADA.

I heard them all, and felt for thee the while.

These Levites were with me ready to aid  
Or perish with you, such was our resolve.

(*To JOASH, embracing him.*)

May God watch o'er thee, child, whose courage bore,  
Just now, such noble witness to His Name.

Thy service, Abner, has been well discharged:

I shall expect thee at th' appointed hour.

I must return, this impious murderess  
Has stain'd my vision, and disturb'd my prayers;

The very pavement that her feet have trod

My hands shall sprinkle o'er with cleansing blood.

SCENE IX.

CHORUS.

ONE OF THE MAIDENS FORMING THE  
CHORUS.

What star has burst upon our eyes?

What shall this wondrous child become one day?

Vain pomp and show he dares despise,  
Nor lets those charms, where danger lies,

Lead his young feet from God astray.

ANOTHER VOICE.

While all to Baal's altar flock,  
And for the Queen their faith disown,  
A child proclaims that Israel's Rock  
Is the eternal God alone,  
And though this Jezebel may mock,  
Elijah's spirit he has shown.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Who will the secret of thy birth explain?  
Dear child, some holy prophet lives in thee again!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Thus grew the gentle Samuel of yore,  
Beneath the shadow of God's dwelling-place;

And he became the hope of Israel's race,  
To guide and comfort; this be thou and more!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Oh! blest beyond compare,  
The child who knows His love,  
Who early hears His voice, and keeps with care

The teaching he receives from God above!

Far severed from the world, from birth endured

With all the gifts of Heaven,  
No evil influence has imbued  
His innocence with sin's infectious leaven.

ALL THE CHORUS.

A happy youth he spends,  
Whom the Lord teaches, whom the Lord defends!

THE SAME VOICE (*alone*).

As in sequester'd vale,  
Where a clear streamlet flows,  
Shelter'd from every stormy gale  
Darling of Nature, some young lily grows.

Far severed from the world, from birth endured

With all the gifts of Heaven,  
No evil influence has imbued  
His innocence with sin's infectious leaven.

ALL THE CHORUS.

Blest more than tongue can tell,  
The child whom God inclines to keep  
His statutes well!

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

With faltering steps doth dawning Virtue  
tread  
'Mid countless perils that beset the way;  
What hindrances and snares for him are  
spread  
Who seeks thee, Lord, and fears from  
innocence to stray!  
Where can Thy saints a shelter find,  
With foes in front and foes behind?  
Sinners fill all the earth, my God, look  
where we may.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Palace and City, David loved so well,  
O Mount, where God himself long  
deigned to dwell,  
What has thy crime that draws down  
vengeance been?  
What sayest thou, dear Zion, to behold,  
Seated where sat thy kings from days of  
old,  
An impious foreign Queen?

ALL THE CHORUS.

What sayest thou, dear Zion, to behold  
An impious foreign Queen,  
Seated where sat thy kings from days  
of old?

THE SAME VOICE (*continues*).

Where once the Lord was bless'd,  
Father and God confess'd  
Where David's holy strains so sweet  
had been,  
What sayest thou, dear Zion, to behold  
Cursing thy Name thy kings adored of  
old,  
Praising her own false gods, an impious  
foreign Queen?

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

How often, Lord, how often yet shall we  
Against Thee rising up the wicked see?

They with unhallow'd feet Thy courts  
defile,  
And all who worship Thee as fools  
revile.

How often, Lord, how often yet shall we  
Against Thee rising up the wicked see?

ANOTHER VOICE.

Ah, what avails, say they, this virtue  
stern.  
That from sweet Pleasure's voice  
Morosely bids you turn?  
Your God does naught for you to justify  
your choice.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Where Pleasure leads, laughter and song  
be ours;  
Thus speak those impious throngs:  
Care for the future to dull fools belongs,  
To passion give the reins, cull the sweet  
flow'rs;  
Too quickly at the best years take their  
flight,  
Who knows if he shall see to-morrow's  
light?  
Let us to-day enjoy life's fragrant  
bowers!

ALL THE CHORUS.

Let tears and terrors, Lord, their por-  
tion be,  
These outcast wretches, who shall never  
see  
Thy holy city with eternal glory crown'd;  
Be ours, on whom Thy beams immortal  
shine,  
To hymn Thy gifts divine,  
Be ours with voice of praise Thy majesty  
to sound!

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

Of all their false delights what will  
remain  
To souls absorb'd therein? As visions  
vain,  
That vanish with the dawning day,  
When they awaken with dismay!  
While for the poor Thy table shall be  
spread,  
Deep shall they drain the cup of judg-  
ment dread



That Thou shalt offer to all such as  
 they,  
 When Mercy's hour has fled.

ALL THE CHORUS.

O, wakening of dismay  
 From dream too quickly sped,  
 From error's dangerous sway!

### ACT III.

#### SCENE I.

MATTAN, NABAL, THE CHORUS.

MATTAN.

Go, damsels: let Jehosheba be told  
 That Mattan would in private speak with  
 her.

ONE OF THE MAIDENS OF THE CHORUS.

Mattan! May God in Heav'n confound  
 his plots!

NABAL.

They all disperse in flight without reply!

MATTAN.

Let us draw near.

#### SCENE II.

ZACHARIAH, MATTAN, NABAL.

ZACHARIAH.

Rash man, where would'st thou go?  
 Beware thou do not step beyond this  
 spot:

This is a dwelling sacred to the priests;  
 Our laws forbid all common entrance  
 here.

Whom seekest thou? This solemn day,  
 my sire

Shuns contact with impure idolatry,  
 And prostrate now before Jehovah's  
 shrine,

My mother will not have her pray'r  
 disturb'd.

MATTAN.

My son, be not 'distress'd, we will wait  
 here.

To your illustrious mother I would  
 speak;

I come charged with a message from  
 the Queen.

#### SCENE III.

MATTAN, NABAL.

NABAL.

Their very children ape their insolence!  
 But what means Athaliah now to do?

Whence springs this indecision in her  
 plans?

This morn, rebuff'd by that presumptu-  
 ous priest,

When dreams had warn'd of danger  
 from a child,

Her mind was to destroy Jehoiada,  
 And in this temple Baal's altar place,  
 With thee to serve him; in thy joy I  
 shared,

Hoping to gain my part in the rich spoil.  
 What made her change her fickle pur-  
 pose thus?

MATTAN.

She has not been herself these two days  
 past.

No more is she the bold, clear sighted  
 Queen,

With spirit raised above her timid sex,  
 Whose rapid action overwhelm'd her  
 foes,

Who knew the value of an instant lost:  
 Fear and remorse disturb that lofty soul;

She wavers, falters, all the woman now.  
 Not long ago I fill'd with bitter wrath  
 Her heart already moved by threats  
 from Heav'n,

And she, intrusting vengeance to my  
 care,

Bade me assemble all her guard in  
 haste;

But whether that young child, before  
 her brought

(A poor, unhappy foundling, as they  
 say),

Assuaged the terror that her dream had  
 caused,

Or seeing in the boy some secret charm,  
 I find her shaken in her dire resolve,

Postponing vengeance to some future  
 day;

And fatal strife in all her counsels  
reigns.

"I have inquired," said I, "about that  
child,

And hear strange boasts of royal an-  
cestry,

How to the malcontents, from time to  
time,

The High Priest shows him, bids the  
Jews expect

In him a second Moses, and supports  
His speech with lying oracles." These  
words

Made her brow flush. Swiftly the false-  
hood work'd.

"Is it for me," she said, "to pine in  
doubt?

Let us be rid of this perplexity.

Convey my sentence to Jehosheba:

Soon shall the fire be kindled, and the  
sword

Deal slaughter, soon their Temple shall  
be razed,

Unless, as hostage for their loyalty,

They yield this child to me."

NABAL.

For one unknown,

Whom chance, may be, has thrown into  
their arms,

Will they behold their Temple buried  
low—

MATTAN.

Ah! but no mortals have such pride as  
they.

Rather than to my hands resign a child,  
Whom to his God Jehoiada has vow'd,

He will endure to die the worst of  
deaths,

Besides, they manifestly love this child,  
And, if I construe right the Queen's

account,

Jehoiada knows more than he will say  
Touching his birth. Refusal I foresee,

In any case, with fatal consequence,  
The rest be my concern; with fire and

sword

To wipe this odious Temple from my  
eyes

Is my last hope.

NABAL.

What prompts so fierce a hate?

Is it consuming zeal for Baal's cause?

Myself a child of Ishmael, as thou  
knowest,

I worship neither thine, nor Israel's god.

MATTAN.

Dost think, my friend, that any senseless  
zeal

For a dumb idol could my judgment  
blind—

A perishable log, that worms destroy

In spite of all my efforts, day by day?

From birth devoted to the God, who  
here

Is worship'd, Mattan still might be his  
priest,

If but the love of grandeur, thirst for  
pow'r,

Could be consistent with his stringent  
yoke.

Nabal, I hardly need to thee recall

The quarrel 'tween Jehoiada and me,

When against him I dared the censer  
claim;

They made some stir, my struggle, tears,  
despair.

Vanquish'd, I enter'd on a new career,  
And bound me, soul and body, to the

court.

By slow degrees I gain'd the ear of  
kings,

And soon my voice was deem'd oracular.  
Their hearts I studied, flatter'd each

caprice,

And sprinkled flow'rs for them on  
danger's brink

Nothing to me was sacred that they  
craved,

Measure and weight I alter'd as they  
will'd.

As often as Jehoiada's blunt speech

Boldly offended their fastidious ears,

So often I had pow'r and skill to charm;

Concealing from their eyes unpleasant  
truths,

Gilding their savage passion with fair  
tints.

And lavish more than all of human  
blood.

At length was raised by Athaliah's  
hands

A temple to the god she introduced.  
 Jerusalem with tears the outrage saw;  
 The sons of Levi, stricken with alarm,  
 Appeal'd to Heaven with indignant cries.  
 I only, leading cowards in my train,  
 Deserter from their Law, that act ap-  
     proved,  
 And Baal's priesthood thereby merited.  
 Thus made my rival's formidable foe,  
 I donn'd the mitre; march'd along, his  
     peer.  
 Still, I confess, e'en at my glory's height,  
 Harass'd by memories of the God I left,  
 Some fear remain'd to discompose my  
     soul,  
 And this it is that fans and feeds my  
     rage:  
 Happy if, wreaking vengeance on His  
     shrine,  
 I may reduce His wrath to impotence,  
 And amidst ruin, desolation, death,  
 Lose my remorse in plentitude of crime!  
 Here comes Jehosheba.

## SCENE IV.

JEHOSHEBA, MATTAN, NABAL.

MATTAN.

Sent by the Queen  
 To bring back peace, and hatred drive  
     away,  
 Be not surprised that I should thee  
     accost,  
 Princess, whose gentle spirit comes from  
     Heav'n,  
 A rumor, which of falsehood I suspect,  
 Supports the warning that a dream had  
     giv'n,  
 Accusing the High Priest of dangerous  
     plots,  
 And raising in the Queen a storm of ire.  
 I wish not here to vaunt my services,  
 Knowing Jehoiada to me unjust,  
 But good for evil is a due return.  
 In short, I come commission'd to speak  
     peace.  
 Live, keep your feasts without a shade  
     of fear.  
 For your obedience she but asks a  
     pledge—  
 (My efforts to dissuade her have been  
     vain),  
 This orphan, whom she says that she  
     has seen.

JEHOSHEBA.

Eliakim?

MATTAN.

Whereat I feel some shame  
 On her account, making an idle dream  
 Of too much moment. But unless ye  
     give  
 This child to me forthwith, her mortal  
     foes  
 Ye prove yourselves. Your answer she  
     awaits,  
 Impatient.

JEHOSHEBA.

These, then, are her words of peace!

MATTAN.

And can ye for one moment hesitate  
 By slight concession such a boon to  
     gain?

JEHOSHEBA.

Strange would it be, if Mattan, free of  
     guile,  
 Could trample down the injustice of his  
     heart,  
 And, after being of all ill contriver,  
 Could be the father of some shade of  
     good!

MATTAN.

What is your grievance? Has the  
     Queen, in rage,  
 Sent to tear Zachariah from your arms?  
 He is your son; the other why so dear?  
 This fondness, in my turn, surprises me.  
 What treasure find ye there of priceless  
     worth?  
 Has Heav'n in him sent a deliverer?  
 Bethink you, your refusal may confirm  
 A secret rumor that begins to grow.

JEHOSHEBA.

What rumor?

MATTAN.

That illustrious is his birth,  
 And that thy husband hatches some  
     grand part  
 For him to play.

JEHOSHEBA.

And Mattan, by this tale  
That soothes his rage—

MATTAN.

Princess, it is for thee  
To disabuse my mind. I know thou  
would'st,  
As falsehood's ruthless foe, resign thy  
life  
Sooner than sully thy sincerity.  
By the least word that is opposed to  
truth.

Hast thou no clue then to this mystery?  
Is his birth buried in the deepest night?  
Knowest thou not thyself from whom  
he sprang?

Whose hands they were that gave him  
to thy spouse?

I pause for answer; ready to believe  
thee.

Give glory, Princess, to the God thou  
servest.

JEHOSHEBA.

Base man, it suits thee well to dare to  
name

A God whom thou hast taught men to  
blaspheme!

Can such a wretch as thou invoke His  
truth,

Thou on the seat of foul corruption  
throned,

Where falsehood reigns and spreads its  
poison round,

Whose lip with treachery and imposture  
teems!

SCENE V.

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, MATTAN, NABAL.

JEHOIADA.

Where am I? Is this Baal's priest I see?  
Does David's daughter with a traitor  
talk,

And turn a listening ear? Dost thou  
not fear

That 'neath his feet should gape a gulf  
profound

And flames forth issuing straight scorch  
and consume thee,

Or these walls crush thee falling upon  
him?

What would he? Why this bold  
effrontery?

Why comes God's foe to taint this holy  
air.

MATTAN.

To rail is but to be Jehoiada!

Yet might he well, in reverence for the  
Queen,

Show greater prudence, and forbear to  
insult

The chosen envoy of her high command.

JEHOIADA.

With what ill-omened tidings art thou  
charged?

What dreadful mission brings such mes-  
senger?

MATTAN.

Jehosheba has heard the royal will.

JEHOIADA.

Then get thee from my presence, impious  
wretch;

Go, and fill up the measure of thy crimes.  
Soon will God make thee join the per-  
jured crew

Of Dathan, Doeg, and Ahithophel;  
The dogs He fed with fallen Jezebel,

Waiting to glut their fury upon thee,  
Besiege thy door, all howling for their  
prey!

prey!

MATTAN (*in confusion*).

Ere the day close—which of us is to be—  
'Twill soon be seen—but, Nabal, let  
us go.

NABAL.

Where dost thou stray? Is then thy  
sense distraught?

There lies thy way.

SCENE VI.

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA.

JEHOSHEBA.

The storm's about to burst:  
The angry Queen demands Eliakim.  
Already they begin to penetrate

The mystery of his birth and thy designs,  
Mattan could all but tell his father's  
name.

JEHOIADA.

Who to the traitor can have giv'n a  
clue?

Thine agitation may have told too much.

JEHOSHEBA.

I have done all I could to master it:  
And yet, believe me, danger presses  
close.

Let us reserve this child for happier  
times.

While still our wicked foes deliberate,  
Ere they come round to tear him from  
our arms,

Let me, my lord, hide him a second time:  
The gates stand open, and the way is  
free.

To wildest deserts must I carry him?  
Ready am I. I know a secret path,  
By which, without a chance of being  
seen,

Crossing the Kedron's torrent with the  
lad,

The wilderness I'll gain, where wept of  
old

David, in flight from his rebellious son,  
And seeking safety from pursuit like us.  
I shall fear less for him lions and  
bears—

But why reject Jehu's good offices?  
Is not the counsel sound that I unfold?

Let us in Jehu's charge this treasure  
place,

And one may reach his realm this very  
day;

The way that leads to him is short. Nor  
starts

The heart of Jehu from compassion's  
touch;

The name of David he in honor holds.  
Ah! lives there king so cruel and so  
hard,

Unless his mother were a Jezebel,  
Who would not pity such a suppliant's  
cry?

Must not all monarchs make his cause  
their own?

JEHOIADA.

What timid counsels, and how boldly  
urged!

Canst thou then place thy hopes in  
Jehu's aid?

JEHOSHEBA.

Does God forbid all forethought and all  
care?

Condemns He not too blind a con-  
fidence?

Making mankind fulfill His holy ends,  
Is it not God Himself arms Jehu's  
hands?

JEHOIADA.

Jehu, whom God in His deep wisdom  
chose,

Jehu, on whom I see thy hopes are  
based,

Ungratefully forgets His benefits;  
Ahab's fierce daughter he has left in  
peace,

And follows the vile steps of Israel's  
kings,

Keeps up the shrines of Egypt's bestial  
god,

And on high places rashly dares to burn  
An incense that the Lord our God  
abhors.

Jehu too surely lacks the upright heart,  
And clean hands, needed to promote His  
cause.

No, we must cling to God, and Him  
alone.

We must not hide but plainly show the  
boy,

With royal diadem around his brow;  
I e'en intend to advance the appointed  
hour,

Ere Mattan can mature his counterplot.

SCENE VII.

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, AZARIAH (*fol-  
lowed by the CHORUS, and a  
number of LEVITES*).

JEHOIADA.

Well, Azariah, is the Temple closed?

AZARIAH.

I have seen all the gates securely barr'd.



JEHOIADA.

Remain there none but thou and thine  
allies?

AZARIAH.

Twice have I gone all round the sacred  
courts,  
All have fled hence, nor think they of  
return,  
Scatter'd by panic like a flock of sheep;  
The holy tribe are left sole worshipers.  
Never, since they escaped from Pha-  
raoh's pow'r,  
Has such dismay as this the people  
seized.

JEHOIADA.

Faint-hearted people, born for slavery,  
Bold only against God! Let us pursue  
The work we have in hand. But who  
still keeps  
These children in our midst?

ONE OF THE MAIDENS FORMING THE  
CHORUS.

Could we, my lord,  
Sever ourselves from you? No strangers  
we  
Here, in God's House, where ranged  
beside thee stand  
Our fathers and our brothers.

ANOTHER MAIDEN.

If to avenge  
The shame of Israel we lack Jael's  
pow'r,  
Who pierced the temples of God's im-  
pious foe,  
We may at least for Him our lives lay  
down;  
When for His threaten'd shrine your  
arms shall fight,  
At least our tears may to His throne  
appeal.

JEHOIADA.

Lo, what avengers of Thy holy cause,  
O Wisdom infinite—these priests and  
babes!  
But, Thou supporting, who can make  
them fall?

Thou canst, at will, recall us from our  
graves,  
Canst wound and heal, canst kill and  
make alive.  
They put no trust in merits of their  
own,  
But in Thy Name, for them so oft  
invoked,  
Thy promise to the holiest of their  
kings,  
This Temple where Thou dost vouch-  
safe to dwell,  
Destined to last long as the sun in  
Heaven.  
Why throbs my heart with holy ecstasy?  
Is it God's Spirit thus takes hold of me,  
Glowing in my breast, speaks, and unseals  
mine eyes?  
Before me spread, dim distant ages rise.  
Ye Levites, let your melodies conspire  
To fan the flame of inspiration's fire.

THE CHORUS (*singing to the accompani-  
ment of musical instruments*).

Lord, be Thy voice to our dull ears  
conveyed,  
Thy holy message to our hearts be  
borne,  
As to the tender blade  
Comes, in the spring, the freshness of  
the morn!

JEHOIADA.

Ye heavens hear my voice; thou earth  
give ear:  
That the Lord sleeps, no more let Israel  
fear:  
The Lord awakes! Ye sinners, dis-  
appear!

(*The music begins again, and JEHOIADA  
immediately resumes.*)

How has pure gold changed into worth-  
less lead?  
What Pontiff's blood is at the altar  
shed?  
Weep, Salem; faithless city, weep in  
vain!  
Thy murderous hands have God's own  
prophets slain:  
Therefore His love for thee hath  
banish'd been,  
Thine incense is to Him a smoke  
unclean.



Oh, whither are these tender captives  
 led?  
 The Lord the queen of cities hath dis-  
 crown'd,  
 Cast off her kings, her priests in fetters  
 bound;  
 Within her streets no festal throngs are  
 found:  
 The Temple falls! high leap the flames  
 with cedar fed!  
 Jerusalem, sad spectacle of woe,  
 How in one day thy beauty disap-  
 pears!  
 Would that mine eyes might be a fount  
 of tears,  
 To weep thine overthrow!

AZARIAH.

Oh, holy shrine!

JEHOSHEBA.

Oh, David!

THE CHORUS.

Lord, restore  
 Favor to Thine own Zion, as of yore!

*(The music begins again, and JEHOIADA,  
 a moment afterwards, breaks in  
 upon it).*

JEHOIADA.

What new Jerusalem is this draws nigh,  
 With beams of light that from the desert  
 shine?

She bears upon her brow a mark divine:  
 Ye peoples, raise your joyous song on  
 high!

Zion is born anew, far fairer to the eye.  
 From every side a gathering crowd I  
 view,

Children that thine own bosom never  
 knew;

Jerusalem arise, lift up thine head!

Thy glory fills with wonder all these  
 kings,

Each monarch of the earth his homage  
 brings,

Her mightiest kiss the dust where thou  
 dost tread,

All press to hail the light around thee  
 shed.

Blessèd be he whose soul with ardor  
 glows

To see fair Zion rise!

Drop down your dews, ye skies,

And let the earth her Saviour now dis-  
 close!

JEHOSHEBA.

Ah, whence may we expect a gift so  
 rare,  
 If those, from whom that Saviour is to  
 spring—

JEHOIADA.

Prepare, Jehosheba, the royal crown,  
 Which David wore upon his sacred  
 brow:

*(To the Levites.)*

And ye, to arm yourselves, come, follow  
 me

Where are kept hidden, far from eyes  
 profane,

That dread array of lances, and of  
 swords,

Which once were drench'd with proud  
 Philistia's blood,

And conquering David, full of years  
 and fame,

Devoted to the Lord who shelter'd him,  
 Can we employ them for a nobler use?

Come; and I will myself distribute them.

SCENE VIII.

SALOME, THE CHORUS.

SALOME.

What fearful scenes, my sisters, must  
 we see!

These arms, great God, strange sacrifice  
 portend:

What incense, what firstfruits do they  
 intend

To offer on Thine altar unto Thee?

ONE OF THE MAIDENS OF THE CHORUS.

What sight is this to meet our timid  
 eyes!

Who would have thought that we should  
 e'er behold

Forests of spears arise,

And swords flash forth, where Peace  
 has dwelt from days of old?

ANOTHER.

How comes it that, when danger is at  
 hand,

Our city shows such dull indifference?  
How comes it, sisters, that for our  
defense  
E'en valiant Abner leads no succoring  
band?

SALOME.

Ah! In a court that owns no other  
laws  
Than force and violence,  
Who would embrace the inauspicious  
cause  
Of youthful innocence?  
Baseness and blind submission there pro-  
vide  
High honors that to virtue are denied.

ANOTHER MAIDEN.

When danger and disorder grimly  
frown,  
For whom thus bring they forth the  
consecrated crown?

SALOME.

The Lord hath deign'd to speak  
But vainly do we seek  
His prophet's utterance to comprehend.  
Arms he destructions upon us to wreak?  
Or arms He to defend?

ALL THE CHORUS *sings*.

Promise and threat! What may this  
mystery be?  
What evil and what good in turn fore-  
told!  
How with such anger can such love  
agree?  
Who shall the clue unfold?

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

Zion shall perish in devouring flame  
And all her beauty shall be overthrown.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Zion's defense is in Jehovah's Name,  
His deathless word her sure foundation  
stone.

THE FIRST VOICE.

I see her glory sink before mine eyes!

THE SECOND VOICE.

The spreading radiance of her light I  
see!

THE FIRST VOICE.

Plunged in the deepest gulf of misery!

THE SECOND VOICE.

Zion uplifts her forehead to the skies!

THE FIRST VOICE.

What ruin!

THE SECOND VOICE.

Endless life to her belongs!

THE FIRST VOICE.

What cries of pain!

THE SECOND VOICE.

Hark to victorious songs!

A THIRD VOICE.

Cease these perplexing thoughts to trace,  
God will the mystery solve, we know  
not how.

ALL THREE VOICES.

Before His wrath in reverence let us  
bow,  
And let our hopes His love embrace.

ANOTHER VOICE.

The heart whose love is Thine,  
My God, who can disturb its peace?  
Thy will supreme its guiding star doth  
shine,  
With beams that never cease:  
What happiness in earth or heav'n can  
be  
Like peace that keeps in sweet tran-  
quillity,  
The heart that loveth Thee?

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

JOASH, JEHOSEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME,  
A LEVITE, THE CHORUS.

SALOME.

With step majestic, by my mother's side,

Comes with my brother young Eliakim.  
Sisters, what bear they wrapp'd within  
those veils?  
What means that sword carried in front  
of them?

JEHOSHEBA (*to ZACHARIAH*).

My son, with reverence on this table  
place  
The awful volume of our holy Law.  
And thou, my sweet Eliakim, lay here,  
Close to the book of God, this diadem.  
Levite, it is Jehoiada's command,  
Let David's sword be placed beside his  
crown.

JOASH.

Dear Princess, tell me, what new sight  
is this?  
The sacred scroll, the sword, the diadem?  
Since God within His Temple shelter'd  
me,  
No preparation have I seen like this.

JEHOSHEBA.

Soon will thy wondering doubts be  
clear'd, my son.

JOASH.

Try not that diadem upon my brow!  
'Tis profanation of the glorious dead!  
The King who wore it claims more  
reverence.  
A poor unhappy child, left for the  
bears—

JEHOSHEBA (*trying the crown upon him*).

Let be, my son: thus has it been  
enjoined.

JOASH.

But do I hear thee sob? Princess, thy  
cheeks  
Are wet with tears! What pity touches  
thee?  
Am I, as Jephthah's daughter was of  
old,  
To be presented for a sacrifice,  
And, by my death, appease the wrath of  
God?  
A son has naught his Father may not  
claim.  
Ah, me!

JEHOSHEBA.

Lo, here is one who will declare God's  
will  
To thee, alone: fear not.  
Come, let us go.

SCENE II.

JOASH, JEHOIADA.

JOASH (*running into the High Priest's  
arms*).

Father!

JEHOIADA.

My son!

JOASH.

What preparation's here?

JEHOIADA.

'Tis right, my son, that thou should'st  
know the truth,  
And, sooner than all others, learn God's  
will,  
His purpose for His people and for  
thee.  
Arm thee with courage, and renew thy  
faith.  
The time is come to prove that fervent  
zeal  
Which I have cherish'd in thy heart with  
care,  
And to discharge the debt due to thy  
God.  
Art thou resolv'd to show a generous  
mind?

JOASH.

Yea, ready if He will to give my life.

JEHOIADA.

Oft hast thou heard the story of our  
kings;  
Dost bear in mind, my son, how strict  
the laws  
A king must follow, worthy of the  
crown?

JOASH.

Wise kings, for thus hath God Himself  
declared,

Will not rely on riches and on gold,  
But fear the Lord their God, regarding  
still  
His precepts, and His judgments, and  
His laws,  
Nor yoke oppressive on their brethren  
lay.

JEHOIADA.

But wert thou bound to copy one such  
king,  
Which would'st thou choose to imitate,  
my son?

JOASH.

There seems to me none worthy to  
compare  
With faithful David, full of love divine.

JEHOIADA.

Thou would'st not follow then the  
erring steps  
Of faithless Joram and his impious son?

JOASH.

Father!

JEHOIADA.

Proceed, and tell me all thy mind.

JOASH.

Whoso resembles them perish as they!  
(JEHOIADA *prostrates himself at his feet.*)

Father, why dost thou kneel before my  
face?

JEHOIADA.

I pay thee the respect I owe my King.  
Joash, prove worthy of thine ancestor,  
Of David.

JOASH.

Am I Joash?

JEHOIADA.

Thou shalt know  
How graciously God foil'd the savage  
plot  
Of Athaliah, saving thee from death,  
Already with the dagger in thy breast.  
Nor from her fury art thou yet escaped:  
With the same eagerness that would  
erewhile

Have slain in thee her son's posterity,  
Her cruelty is bent on thy destruction,  
Nor does a change of name elude pur-  
suit.

But 'neath thy standard I have gather'd  
here,  
Prompt to avenge thee, an obedient  
band.

Enter, brave captains of the holy seed,  
Honor'd by sacred service in your turns.

### SCENE III.

JEHOIADA, JOASH, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL,  
AND THE THREE OTHER CHIEFS  
OF THE LEVITES.

JEHOIADA (*continues*).

Lo there, the King's avengers 'gainst his  
foes!  
And there, ye priests, behold your prom-  
ised King!

AZARIAH.

Why, 'tis Eliakim!

ISHMAEL.

Is that sweet child—

JEHOIADA.

The rightful heir of Judah's kings, the  
last  
Of hapless Ahaziah's lineage,  
Called by the name of Joash, as ye know.  
All Judah, like yourselves, bewail'd the  
fate  
Of that fair tender flow'r so soon cut  
down,  
Believing him with all his brethren  
slain.  
With them he met the traitor's cruel  
knife:  
But Heaven turn'd aside the mortal  
stroke,  
Kept in his heart the smouldering spark  
of life,  
And let my wife, eluding watchful eyes,  
Convey him in her bosom, bathed in  
blood,  
And hide him in the Temple with his  
nurse,  
I being sole accomplice of her theft.

JOASH.

Ah, how, my father, can I e'er repay  
The kindness and the love so freely  
giv'n?

JEHOIADA.

The time will come to prove that gratitude.  
Look then upon your King, your only hope!  
My care has been to keep him for this hour;  
Servants of God, 'tis yours that care to crown.  
The child of Jezebel, the murderess queen,  
Inform'd that Joash lives, will soon be here,  
Opening for him the tomb a second time,  
His death determined, though himself unknown.  
Priests, 'tis for you her fury to forestall  
And Judah's shameful slavery to end,  
Avenge your princes slain, your Law restore,  
Make Benjamin and Judah own their King.  
The enterprise, no doubt, is dangerous,  
Attacking a proud queen upon her throne,  
Who rallies to her standard a vast host  
Of hardy strangers and of faithless Jews:  
But He who guides and strengthens me is God.  
Think, on this child all Israel's hope depends.  
The wrath of God already marks the Queen;  
Here have I muster'd you, in her despite,  
Nor lack ye warlike arms as she believes.  
Haste, crown we Joash, and proclaim him King,  
Then, our new Prince's valiant soldiers, march,  
Calling on Him with Whom all victory lies,  
And, waking loyalty in slumbering hearts,  
E'en to her palace track our enemy.  
What hearts, so sunk in sloth's inglorious sleep,

Will not be roused to follow in our steps,  
When in our sacred ranks they see advance  
A King whom God has at His altar fed,  
Aaron's successor, and a train of priests  
Leading to battle Levi's progeny,  
And in those self-same hands, by all revered,  
The arms that David hallow'd to the Lord?  
Our God shall spread His terror o'er His foes.  
Shrink not from bathing you in heathen blood;  
Hew down the Tyrians, yea, and Jacob's seed.  
Are ye not from those famous Levites sprung  
Who, when inconstant Israel wickedly  
At Sinai worship'd the Egyptian god,  
Their dearest kinsmen slew with righteous zeal,  
And sanctified their hands in traitors' blood,  
Gaining the honor, by this noble deed,  
Of serving at the altars of the Lord?  
But I perceive your zeal already fired;  
Swear then upon this holy volume, first,  
Before this King whom Heav'n restores to-day,  
To live, to fight, yea, or to die for him!

AZARIAH.

Here swear we, for ourselves and brethren all,  
To establish Joash on his father's throne,  
Nor, having taken in our hands the sword,  
To lay it down till we have slain his foes.  
If anyone of us should break this vow,  
Let him, great God, and let his children feel  
Thy vengeance, from Thine heritage shut out,  
And number'd with the dead disown'd by Thee!

JEHOIADA.

And thou, my King, wilt thou not swear to be  
Faithful to this eternal Law of God?



## JOASH.

How could I ever wish to disobey?

## JEHOIADA.

My son—once more to call thee by that name—

Suffer this fondness, and forgive the tears

Prompted by too well founded fears for thee.

Far from the throne, in ignorance brought up

Of all the poisonous charms of royalty,  
Thou knowest not th' intoxicating fumes  
Of pow'r uncurb'd and flattery's magic spells;

Soon will she whisper that the holiest laws,

Tho' governing the herd, must kings obey;

A monarch owns no bridle but his will;  
All else must bow before his majesty;  
Subjects are rightly doom'd to toil and tears

And with a rod of iron should be ruled,  
For they will crush him if they be not crush'd.

Thus will fresh pitfalls for your feet be dug,

New snares be spread to spoil your innocence,

Till they have made you hate the truth at last,

By painting virtue in repulsive guise.

Alas! our wisest king was led astray.

Swear on this book, before these witnesses,

That God shall be thy first and constant care;

Scourge of the evil, refuge of the good,  
That you will judge the poor as God directs;

Rememb'ring how, in simple linen clad,  
Thou wast thyself a helpless orphan child.

## JOASH.

I promise to observe the Law's commands.

If I forsake Thee, punish me, my God.

## JEHOIADA.

I must anoint thee with the holy oil.  
Jehosheba, thou mayest show thyself.

## SCENE IV.

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL,  
THE THREE OTHER CHIEFS OF THE  
LEVITES, THE CHORUS.

JEHOSEBA (*embracing JOASH*).

My King, and son of David!

## JOASH.

Mother, dear,

My only mother! Zachariah, come,  
Embrace thy brother.

JEHOSEBA (*to ZACHARIAH*).

Kneel before thy king.

(ZACHARIAH *casts himself at the feet of JOASH*.)

JEHOIADA (*while they embrace one another*).

My children be united ever thus!

JEHOSEBA (*to JOASH*).

Thou knowest then whose blood has  
giv'n thee life.

## JOASH.

And who had robb'd me of it, but for thee.

## JEHOSEBA.

I then may call thee Joash, thy true name.

## JOASH.

And thee shall Joash never cease to love.

## THE CHORUS.

Why, there is—

## JEHOSEBA.

Joash!

## JEHOIADA.

Hear this messenger!



## SCENE V.

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL,  
THE THREE OTHER CHIEFS OF THE  
LEVITES, A LEVITE, THE CHORUS.

## A LEVITE.

I know not what their impious plan  
may be,  
But everywhere resounds the threatening  
trump,  
And amid standards fires are seen to  
shine;  
The Queen is doubtless mustering her  
troops;  
Already, every way of succor closed,  
The sacred mount on which the Temple  
stands  
Insolent Tyrians on all sides invest;  
And one of these blasphemers now  
brings word  
That Abner is in chains, so' can not help.

JEHOSHEBA (*to JOASH*).

Ah! dearest child, by Heav'n in vain  
restored,  
Alas! for safety I can do no more.  
God has forgotten David and his seed!

JEHOIADA (*to JEHOSHEBA*).

Dost thou not fear to draw the wrath  
divine  
Down on thyself, and on the King thou  
lovest?  
And e'en tho' God should snatch him  
from thine arms,  
And will that David's house perish with  
him,  
Art thou not here upon the holy hill,  
Where Abraham our father raised his  
hand  
Obediently to slay his blameless son,  
Nor murmur'd as he to the altar bound  
The fruit of his old age; leaving to God  
Fulfillment of His promise, though this  
son  
Held in himself the hope of all his race?  
Friends, let us take our several posts:  
the side  
That looks towards the east let Ishmael  
guard;  
Guard thou the north; thou, west; and  
thou the south.

Take heed that no one, with imprudent  
zeal,  
Levite or priest, unmasking my designs,  
Burst forth in headlong haste before the  
time;  
Let each, as with one common will in-  
spired,  
Wherever placed, till death his post  
maintain.  
Our foes regard you, in their blinded  
rage,  
As timid flocks for slaughter set aside,  
And think that ye will scatter in dismay.  
Let Azariah on the King attend.

(*To JOASH*.)

Come, precious scion of a vigorous stock,  
And with fresh courage thy defenders  
fill;  
Come, don the diadem before their eyes.  
And die, if it must be so, like a King.

(*To JEHOSHEBA*.)

Follow him, Princess.

(*To a LEVITE*.)

Give me thou those arms.

(*To the CHORUS*.)

Offer to God the tears of innocence.

## SCENE VI.

SALOME, THE CHORUS.

ALL THE CHORUS *sings*.

Go forth, ye sons of Aaron, go:  
Never did cause of greater fame  
The spirit of your sires inflame.  
Go forth, ye sons of Aaron, go:  
'Tis for your God and King this day ye  
strike the blow.

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

Hast Thou no shafts in store,  
That Justice may let fly?  
Art thou the jealous God no more,  
No longer God of Vengeance throned  
on high?

## ANOTHER VOICE.

Where, God of Jacob, is Thy goodness  
fled?  
With horrors all around us pressing  
near,  
Have but our sins a voice which Thou  
canst hear  
Wilt Thou on us no more Thy pardon  
shed?

## ALL THE CHORUS.

Where is Thine ancient lovingkindness  
fled?

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

'Tis against Thee that in this fray,  
The wicked set the arrow to the bow;  
"Let us destroy His feasts," say they,  
"No longer let the earth His worship  
show;  
Nor His vexatious yoke let mortals  
longer know.  
His altars overturn, His votaries slay,  
Till of His name and glory.  
Remains not e'en the story;  
Of Him and His Anointed break the  
sway."

## ALL THE CHORUS.

Hast Thou no shafts in store,  
That Justice may let fly?  
Art Thou the jealous God no more,  
No longer God of Vengeance throned  
on high?

ONE VOICE (*alone*).

Sad relic of our kings,  
Last precious blossom of a stem so fair,  
Ah! will the knife this time refuse to  
spare,  
Which to his breast a cruel parent  
brings?  
Tell us, sweet Prince, if o'er thy cradle  
hovered  
Some Angel that protected thee from  
death?  
Or did thy lifeless form in darkness  
covered,  
At God's awakening voice resume its  
breath?

## ANOTHER VOICE.

Great God, dost Thou the guilt upon him  
lay,  
That his rebellious sires forsook Thy  
way?  
Is Thy compassion then clean gone for  
aye?

## THE CHORUS.

Where, God of Jacob, is Thy goodness  
fled?  
Wilt Thou no more Thy gracious pardon  
shed?

ONE OF THE MAIDENS OF THE CHORUS  
(*speaking, not singing*).

Dear sisters, cruel Tyrians hem us  
round,  
Do ye not hear their trumpets' dreadful  
sound?

## SALOME.

Yea, and I hear them raise their savage  
cry,  
I tremble with alarm;  
Haste, let us to our place of refuge fly,  
Where God's Almighty Arm  
Shall in His Temple shelter us from  
harm.

## ACT V.

## SCENE I.

## ZACHARIAH, SALOME, THE CHORUS.

## SALOME.

What news, dear Zachariah, dost thou  
bring?

## ZACHARIAH.

Double the fervor of your prayers to  
Heav'n!  
Sister, our latest hour perhaps draws  
nigh.  
For the dread conflict orders have been  
giv'n.

## SALOME.

And what does Joash?

ZACHARIAH.

He has just been crown'd,  
 And by the High Priest with the holy  
 oil  
 Anointed. Oh, what joy in every eye  
 Welcomed a sovereign ransom'd from  
 the tomb,  
 A scar still showing where the dagger  
 fell!  
 There too might have been seen his  
 faithful nurse,  
 Who, almost hidden in a far recess,  
 Was watching her loved charge, tho'  
 none but God  
 And our dear mother witness'd her concern.  
 Our Levites wept in tenderness and joy,  
 Mingling with sobs their cries of glad  
 delight:  
 He 'mid these transports, all untouch'd  
 by pride,  
 Gave gracious smiles, words, pressure  
 of the hand;  
 And, swearing to conform with their  
 advice,  
 This one his father, that his brother  
 call'd.

SALOME.

And has our secret reach'd the world  
 without?

ZACHARIAH.

'Tis known to none beyond the Temple  
 walls.  
 The sons of Levi, in divided bands,  
 Are ranged in solemn silence at the  
 doors,  
 All in an instant ready to rush forth  
 And raise the signal shout, "Long live  
 the King!"  
 But Azariah has been strictly charged  
 To guard the Prince's life from any  
 risk.  
 Meanwhile the scornful Queen, dagger  
 in hand,  
 Laughs at our frail defense of brazen  
 doors,  
 Awaits the engines that shall break them  
 down,  
 And threatens blood and ruin with each  
 breath.  
 Some priests, my sister, ventured to  
 advise  
 That in a crypt, dug in the days of old,

We should at least the precious Ark  
 conceal;  
 "Such fears insult our God," my father  
 said,  
 "Shall then the Ark that caused proud  
 tow'rs to fall,  
 That drove the waters of the Jordan  
 back,  
 And shatter'd to the earth Philistia's  
 gods,  
 Flee from before a shameless woman's  
 face!"  
 Our mother, standing near in mortal  
 dread,  
 Now to the Prince, now to the altar  
 turns  
 Her wavering glance, yielding to mute  
 alarm,  
 A sight to make a very savage weep.  
 From time to time the King, with fond  
 embrace,  
 Soothes her—Dear sisters, follow in my  
 steps,  
 And, if this day our King is doom'd to  
 die,  
 Let the same fate with him unite us all.

SALOME.

What rude hand knocks with quick re-  
 peated strokes?  
 What makes these Levites in confusion  
 run?  
 Why with such caution do they hide  
 their arms?  
 Say, is the Temple forced?

ZACHARIAH.

Your fears dispel,  
 God sends us Abner.

SCENE II.

JEHOIADA, JEHOSEBA, ZACHARIAH, SA-  
 LOME, ABNER, ISHMAEL, TWO  
 LEVITES, THE CHORUS.

JEHOIADA.

Can I trust mine eyes?  
 How did dear Abner find his way to us,  
 Right through the enemy's blockading  
 camp?  
 'Twas said that Athaliah, to insure  
 The execution of her cruel plots,  
 Had bound in iron chains thy generous  
 hands.

ABNER.

My lord, she fear'd my courage and my  
zeal,  
And worse than fetters gave me for  
reward,  
Confining me within a loathsome den,  
To wait until the Temple should be  
burn'd,  
And she, unsated still with streams of  
blood,  
Should come to free me from an irk-  
some life,  
And cut short days, which sorrows to  
survive  
My princes should have ended long ago.

JEHOIADA.

What miracle procured thee thy release?

ABNER.

God only knows how works her cruel  
heart.  
She sent for me; and said with anxious  
air—  
"Thou seest this temple by my troops  
beset:  
Soon will the vengeful flames but ashes  
leave,  
In spite of all thy god can do to save.  
Yet upon two conditions may his priests  
Redeem their lives, but no time must be  
lost,  
That in my pow'r they place Eliakim,  
With treasure known to them, and them  
alone,  
Amass'd by David when he reign'd of  
yore,  
And left a secret in the High Priest's  
charge,  
Go, tell them on these terms I let them  
live."

JEHOIADA.

What course, dear Abner, thinkest thou  
the best?

ABNER.

Give her the gold, if it indeed be true,  
That in thy keeping David's treasure  
lies,  
And all besides, that from her greedy  
hands

Thou hitherto hast saved, precious and  
rare.

Give all; or thou wilt have vile mur-  
derers come,

To break the altar, burn the cherubim,  
And, on our sacred ark laying rude  
hands,

Stain with thy priestly blood the inner  
shrine.

JEHOIADA.

But, Abner, how can I in honor yield  
To punishment a poor unhappy child,  
Whom God Himself intrusted to my  
care,  
And save our lives by sacrificing his?

ABNER.

Would to Almighty God, Who sees my  
heart,

That Athaliah might forget the boy,  
And be content her cruelty to slake  
With Abner's blood, thinking thereby to  
soothe

Her angry gods! but what avails your  
care?

If ye all perish, will he die the less?  
Does God command what is impossible?  
When, in obedience to a tyrant's law,  
His mother trusted Moses to the Nile,  
Almost as soon as born, condemn'd to  
die;

Yet God, against all hope, his life pre-  
served,

And made the King himself his child-  
hood rear.

Who knows His purpose tow'rd Elia-  
kim?

E'en such a lot may be for him in store,  
And the fell murderess of the royal  
seed

Be render'd sensitive to pity's touch.  
Not long ago I saw steal o'er her face  
A tender look, that by Jehosheba  
Was mark'd as well, calming her wrath-  
ful mood.

Princes, the hour of danger claims thy  
voice!

What! Shall Jehoiada, with thy con-  
sent,

For a mere stranger, let his son and  
thee,

Yea, all this people, fruitlessly be slain,  
And flames devour the only spot on  
earth

Where God is worship'd? What could  
ye do more  
Were he the sole survivor of our Kings,  
Your ancestors?

JEHOSHEBA (*aside to JEHOIADA*).

Thou seest his loyal heart;  
Tell him the truth.

JEHOIADA.

The time is not yet come.

ABNER.

Time is more precious than thou thinkest,  
Sir.

While thou art doubting what reply to  
give,

Mattan, at Athaliah's ear, demands,  
Burning with rage, a speedy massacre.  
Must I fall prostrate at thy hallow'd  
knees?

Now in the name of that Most Holy  
Place,

Unseen by mortal eye save thine, where  
dwells

God's glory; howsoever hard the task,  
Let us think how to meet the sudden  
blow.

I only beg a moment's breathing space:  
To-morrow, yea to-night, I will secure  
The Temple, and make outrage dan-  
gerous.

But I perceive my words are lost on  
thee,

Tears and entreaties pow'rless to per-  
suade,

Too strict thy sense of duty to give way.  
Well, find me then some weapon, spear  
or sword,

And, where the foe await me, at these  
gates,

Abner at least can die a soldier's death.

JEHOIADA.

I yield. Your proffer'd counsel I  
embrace:

Abner, we will avert these threaten'd  
ills.

'Tis true that David left a treasure here,  
That to my charge was trusted, the last  
hope

Left to the Jews in their calamities;

My watchful care bestowed it secretly,

But, since we can not hide it from your  
Queen,

She shall be satisfied, and through these  
doors

Enter, attended by her officers;

But from these altars let her keep afar

The savage fury of her foreign troops,

And spare the House of God from  
pillage dire.

Arrange with her the number of her  
train,

Children and priests can small suspicion  
rouse.

Touching this child she dreads so much,  
to thee,

Knowing thine upright heart, I will  
unfold

The secret of his birth, when she can  
hear;

And thou shalt judge between us, if I  
must

Place this young boy in Athaliah's pow'r.

ABNER.

I take him under my protection now;  
Fear naught, my lord. Back to the  
Queen I haste.

### SCENE III.

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SA-  
LOME, ISHMAEL, TWO LEVITES,  
THE CHORUS.

JEHOIADA.

Great God! The hour is come that  
brings Thy prey!

Hark, Ishmael.  
(*He whispers in his ear.*)

JEHOSHEBA.

Almighty King of Heav'n,  
Place a thick veil before her eyes once  
more,

As when, making her crime of none  
effect,

Thou in my bosom didst her victim hide.

JEHOIADA.

Good Ishmael, go, there is no time to  
lose;

Fulfil precisely this important task;  
And, above all, take heed, when she  
arrives



And passes, that no threatening signs  
 be seen;  
 Children, for Joash be a throne pre-  
 pared;  
 Let our arm'd Levites on his steps  
 attend.  
 Princess, bring hither too his trusty  
 nurse,  
 And dry the copious fountain of thy  
 tears.

(To a LEVITE.)

Soon as the Queen, madly presumptuous,  
 Has cross'd the threshold of the Temple  
 gates,  
 Let all retreat be made impossible;  
 That very moment let the martial trump  
 Wake sudden terror in the hostile camp:  
 Call all the people to support their  
 King,  
 And make her ears ring with the won-  
 drous tale  
 Of Joash by God's providence preserved.  
 He comes.

#### SCENE IV.

JEHOIADA, JEHOSEBA, ZACHARIAH, SA-  
 LOME, JOASH, AZARIAH, A BAND OF  
 PRIESTS AND LEVITES, THE CHORUS.

JEHOIADA *continues*.

Ye Levites, and ye priests of God.  
 Range yourselves round, but do not  
 show yourselves;  
 Leave it to me to keep your zeal in  
 check,  
 And tarry till my voice bids you appear.  
 (They all hide themselves.)  
 My King, methinks this hope rewards  
 thy vows;  
 Come, see thy foes fall prostrate at thy  
 feet.  
 She who in fury sought thine infant life  
 Comes hither in hot haste to slay thee  
 now;  
 But fear her not: think that upon our  
 side  
 Stands the destroying angel as thy  
 guard.  
 Ascend thy throne—The gates are open-  
 ing wide;

One moment let this curtain cover thee.  
 (He draws a curtain.)  
 Princess, thy color changes.

JEHOSEBA.

Can I see  
 Assassins fill God's house, and not grow  
 pale?  
 Why, look how numerous the retinue—

JEHOIADA.

I see them shut the Temple doors again.  
 All is secure.

#### SCENE V.

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSEBA, ABNER,  
 ATHALIAH, AND HER ATTENDANTS.  
 (JOASH is hidden behind the curtain.)

ATHALIAH (to JEHOIADA).

Deceiver, there thou art!  
 Author of mischief, plots, conspiracies,  
 Whose hopes are all upon disturbance  
 based,  
 Inveterate foe of sovereign majesty!  
 Dost thou still lean upon thy god's sup-  
 port,  
 Or has that flimsy trust forsaken thee?  
 He leaves thee and thy temple in my  
 pow'r.  
 Well might I on the altar thou dost  
 serve—  
 But no, thine offer'd ransom shall suf-  
 fice;  
 Fulfill what thou hast promised. That  
 young boy,  
 That treasure which thou must to me  
 resign,  
 Where are they?

JEHOIADA.

Straight shalt thou be satisfied:  
 I am about to show them both at once.

(The curtain is drawn up. JOASH is  
 discovered on his throne; his  
 nurse is kneeling on his right;  
 AZARIAH, sword in hand, is stand-  
 ing on his left; and near him  
 ZACHARIAH and SALOME are kneel-  
 ing on the steps of the throne; a  
 number of LEVITES, with swords  
 in their hands, are ranged on  
 either side.)



Appear, dear child, worthy of royal  
sires.

Queen, dost thou recognize King David's  
heir?

Observe at least these marks thy dagger  
left:

Behold thine offspring, Ahaziah's son!  
Welcome King Joash, Abner, people all.

ABNER.

Heav'ns!

ATHALIAH.

Traitor!

JEHOIADA.

See this faithful Jewess here,  
Whose bosom, as thou knowest, nursed  
him then.

Saved from thy fury by Jehosheba,  
Within this temple God has guarded  
him.

Lo, here is all of David's treasure left!

ATHALIAH.

Traitor, thy fraud will but destroy the  
child:

Rid me, my soldiers, of this vile pre-  
tense!

JEHOIADA.

Soldiers of God, draw near, defend your  
King!

*(The back of the stage opens: the in-  
terior of the temple is shown; and  
armed LEVITES enter from all  
around upon the stage.)*

ATHALIAH.

Treason! Oh, where am I, unhappy  
Queen!

Weapons and enemies on every side!

JEHOIADA.

Thy search is vain, thou canst not 'scape  
the toils

Cast round thee by the God whom thou  
hast scorn'd.

Into our hands has He deliver'd thee;

Drunken with blood He calls thee to  
His bar.

ATHALIAH.

My warriors are turn'd craven, numb  
with fear!

Abner, is this thy coward's snare?

ABNER.

My Queen,

As God is witness—

ATHALIAH.

Never mind thy god,

Avenge me.

ABNER *(throwing himself at the feet of  
JOASH)*.

Upon whom? Joash? My prince?

ATHALIAH.

He Joash! He thy King! Bethink you,  
knaves,

That ye are still beleaguer'd by my  
arms;

I hear my soldiers call me with loud  
shouts.

Tremble, ye rebels! Succor is at hand.

SCENE VI.

JOASH, ATHALIAH, JEHOIADA, ISHMAEL,  
*and all the actors in the  
preceding scene.*

ISHMAEL *(to JEHOIADA)*.

My lord, our foes have left the Temple  
free:

The foreigners are fled, the Jews submit.  
As smoke is driv'n away before the  
wind,

Th' Almighty's voice this army has dis-  
persed.

Our Levites, high above the courts  
around,

Have Ahaziah's son to all proclaim'd,  
Told of his infant life saved from the  
sword,

And Athaliah's fall into the snare.

The trumpets sounded from all sides at  
once,

And, mingled with their cries, such  
terror spread

Throughout the camp as struck with  
wild dismay

Proud Midian at the flash of Gideon's sword.

The Tyrians, casting arms and shields away,

The first, in all directions disappear'd.  
Some Jews, in dazed confusion, shared their flight;

The rest for Joash loudly have declared,  
Owning herein the guiding hand of God.

Yea, all the people, with one heart inspired,

Women, old men, and babes embrace with joy.

Blessing Jehovah and the King He sends,

And hymn the son of David raised to life.

All in the holy city execrate  
The name of Baal, and destroy his shrine.

Mattan is slain.

#### ATHALIAH.

Jehovah, thou hast won!

Yes, it is Joash. Vain denial now!

'Twas here I gave command to have him slain;

He has the mien and features of his sire;

I trace his kinship with the line I hate.  
Thus David triumphs, Ahab is destroy'd.  
Relentless god, this is thy work alone,  
With hopes of easy vengeance luring me,  
And twenty times a day setting my thoughts

In conflict, now remorseful for this child,  
Now dazzled with the prospect of rich spoil,

And loath to give it to devouring flames.  
Well, let him reign, thy care and handiwork!

And, to inaugurate his sovereignty,  
Bid him direct this dagger to my heart!  
This for my grandson is my dying wish—

My wish, nay more than wish, my trust and hope;

That weary of thy law, thy yoke condemn'd,

True to the blood of Ahab, drawn from me,

Following his grandsire's and his father's steps,

He, David's heir, shall make himself abhorr'd,

Profane thine altar, rob thee of thy rites,  
So avenge Ahab, Jezebel, and me!

(ATHALIAH goes out, the Levites follow her.)

#### JEHOIADA.

Out of the Temple precincts have her forth

At once, nor be its holy courts profaned.  
Go, and avenge your princes massacred,  
Whose blood cries out till pacified by hers.

If any venture to defend her cause,  
Him let the sword, along with her, devour.

#### SCENE VII.

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSEBA, ABNER,  
and all the actors in the preceding scene.

JOASH (after descending from his throne).

Thou seest, O Lord, the anguish of my soul,

Oh, turn her malediction from me far,  
And never suffer it to be fulfill'd!

Let Joash die ere he forgets his God!

#### JEHOIADA (to the Levites).

Call all the people, they shall see their King.

Let them approach, and fresh allegiance swear.

King, priests, and people, let us all confirm

The covenant that Jacob made with God;

Grateful for mercy, for our sins ashamed,

And with new vows binding ourselves to Him.

Abner, resume thy post beside the King.

## SCENE VIII.

JOASH, JEHOIADA, A LEVITE, *and all the actors in the preceding scene.*

JEHOIADA (*to the Levite*).

Well, has that monster met with punishment?

THE LEVITE.

Her guilt has been atoned for with the sword.

Jerusalem, so long her fury's prey,  
Relieved at last from her detested yoke,

With joy beholds her weltering in her blood.

JEHOIADA.

By this, the dreadful end her crimes  
deserved,

Learn, King of Judah, nor this truth  
forget:—

Kings have in Heav'n their Judge severe,  
Who to the fatherless

Is Father, and will punish those who  
innocence oppress!

JEAN BAPTISTE RACINE  
(1639-1699).

*Translated by* ROBERT BRUCE BOSWELL.

THE  
SONG OF SONGS  
WHICH IS  
SOLOMON'S





# THE SONG OF SONGS

WHICH IS SOLOMON'S

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

SOLOMON.

NOBLES OF ZION, *Attendant on the King.* Ch. vi. 13.

NOBLES OF ZION. Ch. iii. 11.

THE EGYPTIAN SPOUSE. Ch. i. 16.

CHORAL VIRGINS OF EGYPT. Ch. i. 5.

CHORAL VIRGINS OF JERUSALEM. Ch. i. 2.

VIRGINS OF JERUSALEM, *attendant on the Jewish Queen.* Ch. iii. 7.

CHORAL VIRGINS OF ZION. Ch. iv. 1.

## CHAP. 1. V. 1.

THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS SOLOMON'S.

## DAY THE FIRST.

SCENE. *A plain near the Habitation of Chimham, distant from Jerusalem about six miles, situate on the Confines of Judea, bordering on the Wilderness. The camp of Solomon in view.*

*Processional songs by the Virgins of Jerusalem, advancing to meet the bride.*

(Time—Evening.)

## CANTO THE FIRST.

FIRST VIRGIN *sings (personating the Bride.)*

## V. 2.

Let him on me the balmy kiss bestow,  
With ruby mouth, whence honey'd accents flow:

For ah! those lips are fragrant as the rose,

When on its head the purple orient glows.

SECOND VIRGIN (*still personating the Bride.*)

To share the favor of thy love be mine;  
Thy love, more precious than the choicest wine.

CHORUS of VIRGINS *singing the praises of the Bridegroom.*

## 3.

Sweet is the scent of perfumes rare,  
Exhaling on the ambient air;  
Sweeter thy name—a perfume spread,  
Unrival'd o'er the royal head;  
Therefore the virgins love thy name,  
And join to celebrate thy fame.

SECOND VIRGIN (*of the Bridegroom.*)

## 4.

O draw me "*with thy pow'rful sweets,*"

CHORUS of VIRGINS.

And after thee we'll fly;  
Our sense thy fragrant odour greets,  
As gentle breezes waft it thro' the sky.

FIRST VIRGIN (*personating the Bride.*)

The King conducts me to the nuptial bower,

Oh! deck the path where love delights to stray:

Throw all around each fair delicious flower

That opes its radiant beauties to the day.

CHORUS of VIRGINS (*of the Bridegroom.*)

In thee we'll be glad and rejoice,  
Extolling thy love more than wine;

The upright shall raise the loud voice  
To swell the full chorus divine.

*VIRGINS of EGYPT preceding the Bride,  
addressing themselves to the VIRGINS of  
JERUSALEM.*

*FIRST VIRGIN of EGYPT sings (person-  
ating the Bride.)*

## 5.

I'm brown as Kedar's tents, O virgin  
train!  
Which rise in one bold circle o'er the  
plain;  
But still my form's replete with native  
grace,  
And charms majestic dignify my face.  
Comely am I, as yon pavilion rare,  
Whose broider'd curtains wanton in  
the air;  
Whose splendid foldings mock the gloom  
of night,  
Tipt with gay beams of artificial light.

## 6.

O then, behold me with a partial eye!  
Nor, nicely curious, casual faults de-  
scry;  
What nature gave—the blush of op'ning  
day,  
Is fled, is tarnish'd by the noontide ray;  
Egypt's stern sons required my utmost  
speed,  
And me the keeper of their charge de-  
creed;  
Their int'rest dearer than my own I  
prize—  
And haste o'er desert plains, 'neath  
summer's fervid skies.

*SECOND VIRGIN of EGYPT (inquiring  
for the Bridegroom.)*

## 7.

Tell me, darling of my soul,  
(Thou who can'st ev'ry wish control)  
Tell me where thou feed'st—and where  
Repose at noon thy princely care?  
For why should I still darkling rove,  
E'en by the tents of those I love?

*FIRST VIRGIN of JERUSALEM (in reply).*

## 8.

If thou know not, peerless maid,  
Where thy royal shepherd's laid,  
Mark the footsteps of this flock—  
And winding gently 'neath the rock,  
Feed thy fair kids these shepherds' tents  
beside,  
On the green margin of the mazy tide.

*SECOND VIRGIN of JERUSALEM (per-  
sonating the Bridegroom, on the nearer  
approach of the spouse and her attend-  
ants).*

## 9.

Pleas'd, I compare thee, O my royal  
love!  
(Attended by thy gay, resplendent  
train)  
To stately coursers, which triumphant  
move  
O'er the smooth surface of th' Egyp-  
tian plain;  
Which, taught by skilful hands to  
wield the car,  
Advance, with plaudits, through th'  
admiring throng,  
When Pharaoh quits the fervid scene  
of war,  
And pours with regal majesty along.

*FIRST VIRGIN of JERUSALEM (of the  
Bride).*

## 10.

Thy comely cheeks, adorn'd with rows  
Of Orient pearls, I view,  
And charm'd behold the chain that flows  
O'er breasts of snowy hue!

*CHORUS OF VIRGINS (of the Bride.)*

## 11.

Thy roseate temples we'll enfold  
In triple rows of verdant gold,  
With studs of radiant silver dight,  
Dispensing beams of varied light.

*FIRST VIRGIN of JERUSALEM (person-  
ating the Bride).*

## 12.

Until the king receive me, shed

Unceasing odours on my head;  
Lo! wrapt in majesty profound,  
He waits, in yon capacious round,  
Where circling tents superbly rise,  
Aspiring boldly to the skies;  
My spikenard now its sweets exhales,  
Diffusing fragrance through the vales.

SECOND VIRGIN of JERUSALEM (*of the Bridegroom*).

13.

Precious as stacte is my love to me,  
Which flows spontaneous from the parent tree;  
In a gold casket artfully comprest  
The choice perfume shall dwell upon  
my breast.

FIRST VIRGIN of JERUSALEM (*of the Bridegroom*).

14.

A fragrant cluster is my royal love,  
Cull'd from En-gedi's palm-encircled grove;  
A fragrant cluster of al-hennah pale,  
Whose high effluvia scent the sportive gale.

SCENE THE SECOND—*The Tent of Solomon.*

SOLOMON, *meeting the SPOUSE, as they are conducting her into the royal Pavilion.*

15.

Behold, thou'rt wond'rous fair, my love!  
Behold, thou'rt wond'rous fair!  
Thine eyes, than those of yonder dove  
More mild, more tender are.

*The SPOUSE (to SOLOMON).*

16.

Behold, my best-belov'd is fair!  
Yea, pleasant to the sight!  
Our carpet's green, by nature's care  
With flowrets gay bedight.

SOLOMON (*to the SPOUSE*).

17.

Our beams are cedar, and our ceilings  
rise

(Of cypress form'd) magnificently high!  
Where skillful artists taught the vivid dyes

With changeful hues t' attract the gazer's eye;  
There chosen sentences effulgent glow,  
Pouring instruction on the crowds below;

These shall my fair one view, and rap-  
tur'd own

That art, for once, has nature's self  
outdone.

END of CANTO the FIRST.

DAY THE SECOND.

SCENE—*A Garden belonging to the Palace of the Jewish Queen, in the Country.*

JEWISH QUEEN and her ATTENDANT  
VIRGINS, *the Daughters of Jerusalem.*

CANTO THE SECOND.

(*Time—Morning.*)

JEWISH QUEEN.

V. 1.

I'm now no more than Sharon's com-  
mon rose,  
That blooms neglected on the humble  
thorn,

Where many a flower with equal fra-  
grance glows,  
With equal fragrance scents the breezy  
morn.

I'm now the lily of the lonesome vale,  
Whose maiden beauties die away un-  
seen;

Whose sweets are wafted on th' incon-  
scious gale  
That sweeps the bosom of the desert  
green.

QUEEN *in contemplation, repeating to her attendants a conversation that had past lately, it should seem, between SOLOMON and herself.*

2.

"As shines," said he, "the lily 'mong  
the thorns,

"And with it's lustre the gay scene  
adorns;  
"So shines my love the fairest maids  
among,  
"Bright and conspicuous o'er the virgin  
throng."

3.

As shines the *citron* 'mong th' ignoble  
trees,  
Where, tinged with light, they greet the  
morning breeze;  
So shines my Solomon the youths  
among,  
Beams through the crowd, and gilds th'  
encircling throng.

*The QUEEN recounts some incidents  
which had lately occurred—as SOLO-  
MON'S taking her to the house of  
wine—inviting her to the country,  
etc.—and she concludes with wishing  
his return before the next dawn of  
light.*

I've sat beneath it's shadow with delight,  
It's ample foliage waving o'er my head;  
How sweet the fruit! how grateful to  
the sight  
The new fall'n blossoms o'er my carpet  
spread.

4.

He brought me to the house of wine,  
And bade the liquid rubies flow;  
Bade melting harmony divine  
Assuage my mind depress'd with woe;  
To wake my soul to ecstasy they strove,  
While o'er my head he placed the radi-  
ant lamp of love.

5.

Support me, daughters of the warbling  
string;  
Your rich spic'd wine and cheering  
citrons bring;  
I'm sick of love!—mine eye abhors the  
day;  
Support me, maids, my fleeting spirits  
stay.

6.

O! that his left hand now were laid  
Under my sad desponding head!

And that his right hand did sustain  
Me, sinking 'neath my love-sick pain!

7.

I've charged you oft, O virgin throng!  
By the nimbly bounding roes,  
By the hinds that browse along  
Where the warbling current flows,  
To drop the cadence of your song,  
Nor e'en your softest airs prolong,  
But with cautious steps to move  
And not disturb my sleeping love.

SCENE THE SECOND—*A Chiosk or Arbour  
in the Garden of the Jewish Queen,  
belonging to her Palace in the Coun-  
try.*

JEWISH QUEEN and ATTENDANT  
VIRGINS.

(Time—Evening.)

JEWISH QUEEN (to her Attendants.)

8.

The voice of love then struck my ear!  
(The accents flow'd distinct and clear)  
I look'd—when on the mountain's brow,

9.

Leaping like a wanton roe  
Or youthful hart—behold my love!  
Skipping o'er the cliffs above:  
Now with agile feet he flew,  
Mocking oft the transient view;  
Then lo! he stood behind our verdant  
wall,  
Oft times attentive to the fountain's  
fall;  
Next from the windows view'd the gar-  
den's bloom,  
Or through the lattice-work inhal'd  
perfume:  
When through the foliage beam'd his  
roseate face.  
Like some fair flower, he caught my  
ravish'd eye,—  
A flower expanding with unrivall'd  
grace,  
And its rich beauties opening to the sky.

## 10.

Lo! he spake—the voice of love  
 Warbled thro' the list'ning grove!  
 "Rise up, my love, without delay,  
 "Arise, my fair one, come away.

## 11.

"Behold the rigid winter's o'er,  
 "The brumal rains descend no more.

## 12.

"Now all around the teeming earth  
 "Pours forth her fair luxuriant birth,  
 "And laughing spring, with genial  
 showers,

"Awakes to life the blushing flowers;  
 "Hark! how the feather'd chorists sing,  
 "And, conscious, plume the trembling  
 wing:

"The nightingale, the thorns among,  
 "Sweetly warbling, trills her song:  
 "And now the turtle tells his tale,  
 "Soft cooing in the humid vale;  
 "Through every glade, through every  
 grove

"He pours the dulcet voice of love.

## 13.

"Behold the early figs appear,  
 "With virid surface bright and clear;  
 "The parent tree rich juice supplies,  
 "And swells the round to ampler size:  
 "The vines, besrent with argent dew,  
 "Present their tender grapes to view,  
 "With op'ning flowrets fresh and fair,  
 "Breathing fragrance through the air.  
 "Rise up, my love, without delay,  
 "Arise, my fair one, come away.

## 14.

"From yonder rocky clefts above,  
 "Look down on me, my turtle-dove;  
 "Awaken'd by th' impassion'd strain,  
 "Hear now thy tender mate complain;  
 "And deign, the secret stairs between,  
 "To let thy countenance be seen.  
 "Be mine thy dulcet voice to hear,  
 "Soft breathing on my list'ning ear;  
 "For sweet thy voice, when love inspires  
 "Thy soul with all its wonted fires;  
 "Then fall thy words with easy art,  
 "And melting mingle with the heart:  
 "Superior charms thy comely face adorn,  
 "Bright as the lustre of the rising morn!

## 15.

"Take us, my friends, the little foxes  
 take,  
 "That seize and trample on the fruitful  
 vines;  
 "In wanton sport they ev'ry tendril  
 break,  
 "That round the kindly-fost'ring elm in-  
 twines:  
 "For now, behold, the tender grapes are  
 seen  
 "In fragrant clusters peeping through  
 the green."

## 16.

My best-belov'd is truly mine,  
 And I am his!—O why incline  
 His roving steps, when ev'ning dews  
 prevail,  
 To feed among the lilies of the vale?

## 17.

Before the incense-breathing dawn  
 Shall chase the nightly shades away,  
 And all impurpled glows the lawn,  
 Emblazon'd by the orb of day—  
 Turn, my belov'd;—and be thou like  
 The youthful hart or roe,  
 Which bounding up the path oblique,  
 Leaves dusky vales below:  
 Which leaps exulting on the topmost  
 height  
 Of Beth'er's mountains, ting'd with orient  
 light.

END OF CANTO the SECOND.

## DAY THE THIRD.

SCENE—*The Palace of the Jewish Queen.*  
*Jewish Queen and Attendants.*

## CANTO THE THIRD.

(Time—Morning.)

JEWISH QUEEN to her Attendants, re-  
 lating an incident that had happened  
 (perhaps on the Night preceding  
 that on which SOLOMON set out from  
 Zion to meet the Bride.)



## V. 1.

On my lone bed, one murky night,  
I anxious sought my soul's delight,  
Perplex'd with dire foreboding thought,  
I sought him—but in vain I sought!

## 2.

I said, Behold, I'll instant rise,  
Ere sleep invade my tear-swoll'n eyes;  
About the city will I rove  
Perchance, I there shall find my love:  
I rose, perplex'd with anxious thought,  
And sought him—but in vain I sought.

## 3.

The watchmen round the city rov'd,  
To whom—"Saw ye my best-belov'd?"

## 4.

Scarce had I pass'd the nightly band  
When lo my love!—his glowing hand  
I raptur'd seiz'd; we mov'd along,  
Unheeded by the jovial throng.  
My mother's house appear'd in sight,  
Conspicuous through the shades of night;  
While lamps, from cypress-trees, around  
Shed vivid lustres on the ground:  
A secret chamber there he chose,  
And pleas'd sunk down to calm repose;  
Careful I watch'd him, as he slum'ring  
lay  
Nor bade soft flutes announce returning  
day:

## 5.

But charg'd you, O ye virgin throng,  
By the nimbly-bounding roes,  
By the hinds that browse along  
Where the warbling current flows,  
To drop the cadence of your song,  
Nor e'en your softest airs prolong;  
But with cautious steps to move,  
And not disturb my sleeping love.

SCENE THE SECOND—*An Arbor on some eminence in the garden of the Jewish Queen, commanding a view of the wilderness.*

JEWISH QUEEN and Attendants.  
(Time—Night.)

JEWISH QUEEN (*in surprise on seeing the bridal procession advancing to the city.*)

## 6.

Be still, my soul!—who's this ascends  
From where the wilderness extends?  
Lo! from gold censers fuming aloes rise,  
In smoking columns, mingling with the  
skies!

Pure myrrh and frankincense their  
sweets exhale,  
And foreign perfumes float along the  
vale.

VIRGINS of JERUSALEM, *in reply (describing the carriage of Solomon.)*

## 7.

Behold, King Solomon's approaching  
car  
Irradiates through the thickest glooms  
of night!  
About it stand the valiant men of war,  
Each in his rich effulgent armour dight;  
Threescore of Israel's distinguished  
band,  
The brave protectors of this sacred land.

## 8.

They all hold swords; erected high,  
Lo! how they flame and glitter to the  
sky!  
Anon, dependent from the baldrick,  
throw  
Quick-trembling flashes on the sands  
below:  
Each, in dread war expert, contemns the  
fight,  
And braves the horrors of terrific night.

## 9.

King Solomon a splendid carriage made  
Of cedar-wood, with curious art inlaid;  
There silver pillars, beauteous to behold,  
Spring from a basis all of burnish'd  
gold;  
It's canopy with royal purple glows,  
And the rich curtain kindles as it flows;  
In full festoons it meets the dazzled  
sight,  
Or floats redundant on the brow of  
night.  
The midst thereof, with glowing love  
inwrought,  
Gives to the eye the animated thought;



There gilded characters in mottoes rise,  
 From the gay ground of variegated  
     dyes;  
 Still as they swell the flow'r-wrought  
     ground above,  
 They shine, expressing the fair artist's  
     love:  
 Salem's bright daughters plann'd the  
     great design,  
 And wrought in colours and in traits  
     divine.

SCENE THE THIRD—*Zion, or the City of David.*

NOBLES of ZION, to the CHORAL VIRGINS,  
*ordering them to go forth to meet  
 the Bridegroom, now drawing near  
 the Holy City.*

11.

Go forth, go forth, O virgin throng!  
 From Zion's sacred hill,  
 The timbrels take, and aid the song  
     With your harmonious skill.  
 Go forth, your youthful King behold;  
     His blooming temples, crown'd  
 With triple rows of radiant gold,  
     Cast mild effulgence round;  
 Crown'd by his skilful mother's art,  
 On this his spousal day,  
 When beaming gladness through his  
     heart  
 Spreads it's all-cheering ray.

SCENE THE FOURTH—*The Royal City.*

*Processional Songs, by the Virgins of  
 Zion, in Praise of the Bride.*

FIRST VIRGIN (*personating the Bride-  
 groom.*)

V. 1.

Behold, thou'rt wondrous fair! my Love,  
 Behold, thou'rt wondrous fair!  
 Thine eyes, as of the tender dove,  
 Behind thy veil appear.  
 Thine auburn hair in graceful tresses  
     flows,  
 Shading thy cheeks, more vermeil  
     than the rose.

Such glossy locks Mount Gilead's goats  
     adorn.

As sleek ascending at the break of  
     day,  
 Refresh'd, they catch the balmy breeze  
     of morn,  
 And up the pointed rock with added  
     vigour stray.

SECOND VIRGIN.

2.

Thy pearly teeth are like a new-shorn  
     flock  
 Of sheep, ascending from the argent  
     tide,  
 (Where, from the basis of the craggy  
     rock,  
 The rapid streams in brisk meandrings  
     glide)  
 Which all are twins, none mourns its  
     fellow lost,  
 Or drooping on the plain, or on the  
     white wave tost.

FIRST VIRGIN.

3.

Thy lips are like a scarlet thread,  
 Thy speech enchanting flows!  
 Behind thy veil, what vivid red  
 On each soft temple glows!  
 So glows the gay pomegranate's purple  
     hue,  
 When the bright sections open to the  
     view.

SECOND VIRGIN.

4.

Thy neck's like royal David's tow'r,  
 For splendid arms designed:  
 Like *that* it shews thy sov'reign pow'r,  
 Thy empire o'er mankind:  
 From *thence* are radiant shields dis-  
     play'd,  
 And bucklers rich with gold:  
 Round thy white neck, O princely maid!  
 The wond'ring crowds behold  
 Arms more destructive; aim'd with  
     surer art,  
 They catch the eye, and penetrate the  
     heart.

## FIRST VIRGIN.

5.

Thy two fair breasts like two young  
 roes appear,  
 The tender daughters of the vernal year,  
 Which 'mong the fragrant lilies love to  
 stray,  
 As pure, as soft, as exquisite as they!

SECOND VIRGIN (*personating the Bride-  
 groom.*)

6.

Before the incense-breathing dawn  
 Shall chase the nightly shades away,  
 And all empurpled glows the lawn,  
 Emblazon'd by the orb of day;  
 I'll get me to this mountain, where  
 Pure myrrh embalms the ambient air,  
 And on the hills with joy repose,  
 Where frankincense spontaneous grows.

## FIRST VIRGIN.

7.

How fair art thou, how lovely is thy  
 mien!  
 In all thy form no envious spot is seen.

*End of the PROCESSIONAL SONGS.*

SCENE THE FIFTH—*The Palace of Solomon.*

SOLOMON (*to the Spouse.*)

8.

O come with me, from Lebanon away,  
 My spouse—from Lebanon's exalted  
 height  
 Thine eyes avert, nor Amana survey,  
 Nor Shenir's head, when deck'd with  
 golden light,  
 Nor Hermon's lofty brow, with glist'ring  
 dews bedight.  
 O look on me with tenderness and love!  
 Shun, shun those heights where bears  
 and tigers rove,  
 Those humid dens, and deep sequester'd  
 cells,

Where the fierce lioness securely dwells,  
 Those mountains dire where spotted  
 leopards stray,  
 Darting ferocious on their trembling  
 prey.

9.

From one bright eye a piercing dart  
 Elanc'd, has vanquished all my heart;  
 O how it struggles to be free!  
 But still entangled with that chain,  
 (Which idly from it's fellows straying,  
 Now o'er thy snowy bosom's playing)  
 In vain it sighs for liberty,  
 For freedom still it pants in vain.

10.

My spouse, how beauteous is thy love,  
 How excellent to me!  
 The ruddy wines, that sparkling move,  
 Less grateful are than thee:  
 Far more delicious is thy love than  
 wine,  
 When the brisk liquors o'er the goblets  
 shine:  
 More sweet the scent thy precious per-  
 fumes yield,  
 Than all the spices of En-gedi's field.

11.

Thy rosy lips, O gentle spouse, dispense,  
 In copious strains, enchanting elo-  
 quence!  
 Whene'er thou speak'st, the honey'd ac-  
 cents all  
 Awake the mind to rapture as they fall!  
 Honey and milk thy tuneful tongue im-  
 parts  
 In melting language to our yielding  
 hearts.  
 Thy garments, sweet as Lebanon, ex-  
 hale  
 Their pow'rful odours on the buoyant  
 gale.

*END of CANTO the THIRD.*

DAY THE FOURTH.

SCENE—*A Royal Pavilion in the Palace  
 Garden.*

SOLOMON and the SPOUSE.

## CANTO THE FOURTH.

(Time—Morning.)

SOLOMON (to the SPOUSE.)

V. 12.

My sister-spouse is like a garden fair,  
Enclos'd, by nature's skill, with wondrous care;

While on each side the shelt'ring mountains rise,

(Shooting in rocky columns to the skies)  
Deep in the length'ning vale securely grows,

Untouch'd by vulgar hand, the maiden rose.

All pure art thou, as springs that glide unseen

'Neath vaulted rocks, that bound the neighb'ring green;

Which, safely seal'd, no foul pollution know,

But rise translucid, and translucid flow;  
Chaste as the draught the secret fountain yields,

When fervid summer blasts the sick'ning ing fields.

13.

Thy virtues, royal fair one! rise  
Like some sweet paradise, whose bloom,  
Expanding 'neath congenial skies,  
Breathes on the gale it's choice perfume;  
Within whose verdant borders we behold

Pomegranates, ting'd with vegetable gold;

Delicious fruits of varied hues,  
Besprent with artificial dews,

When the dedal fountain pours  
Limpid drops, in trickling show'rs,

Lighting on the *Hennah* pale;  
And spikenard trembling with the gale.

14.

Scented canes and saffron grow  
Where the gurgling streamlets flow;  
Spikenard and cinnamon we find,  
With other precious spices join'd;  
And, far remov'd from purly rill,  
Tall frankincense ascends the hill;  
The hill rich myrrh and aloes love,

And mingling, graceful, form a grove;  
The grove, relax'd by southern breeze,  
Sheds sweets from aromatic trees.

15.

O spouse! delicious to thy lover's sight  
As bubbling fountains ting'd with noon-tide light,

Whose living waters down the channels stray,

Shining reflective in the solar ray,  
Whose waves derive from *Lebanon* their source,

Winding through flow'ry vales their mazy course;

First from the chasm in his awful side,  
The rude cascades in broken murmurs flow;

Till all uniting in one ample tide,  
With melting warblings glides the stream below.

16.

Awake, O north! and come, thou southern gale!

(Breathing propitious through the flow'ry vale)

Bid trees, exuding, precious spices shed  
On vernal carpets, 'neath their umbrage spread;

Call all the odours of my garden forth,  
Soft southern breezes, cool refreshing north.

SPOUSE (to SOLOMON).

Then come, my love; the genial breezes blow,

The bark distends, the aromatics flow;  
Delicious fruits thy princely hand invite,

And flowers, expanding, court thy curious sight.

SOLOMON (to the SPOUSE.)

V. 1.

I've viewed my garden's varied bloom,  
And pleas'd inhal'd it's rich perfume:  
I've cropt my myrrh with spices rare;  
The honey on my palate glows;  
I've drunk my wine, in vases fair,  
With milk commix'd with nicest care,  
Till o'er the brim brisk curdling masses rose.

SCENE THE SECOND—*A Pavilion in the Palace Garden.*

*The Nuptial Banquet.*

SOLOMON (*to his Friends, assembled at the banquet.*)

(*Time—Evening.*)

Eat, O my friends! and drink with me,  
Quaff deep th' inspiring draught;  
Till, lost in mirth and rapt'rous glee,  
Confusion mingle with the rising thought:

Mark well the gen'rous wine—aright it moves;

Drink deep, my friends; drink to our plighted loves.

END OF CANTO the FOURTH.

DAY THE FIFTH.

SCENE—*The Palace of the Jewish Queen in the Country.*

JEWISH QUEEN and Attendants.

CANTO THE FIFTH.

(*Time—Morning.*)

JEWISH QUEEN (*recounting to the Daughters of Jerusalem an Adventure that had happened on the preceding Night.*)

V. 2.

I slept—but O! my anxious mind,  
To peaceful slumber disinclin'd,  
Still brooded o'er its mighty woes,  
And in my dream the shad'wy train arose;

When lo! a voice the mighty gloom pervades!

('Twas love's known voice that murmur'd thro' the shades.)

He knock'd—attent I caught the welcome sound,

And heard from vaulted domes thick answer'ing strokes rebound.

"Quick ope to me, my gentle love,

"My undefil'd, my turtle-dove:

"For ah! my head is fill'd with dew,  
"My locks with drops of glist'ning hue."

3.

My vest (said I) is laid aside,  
And ev'ry ornament of pride;  
My feet are wash'd: How can I rise,  
When midnight slumbers hover o'er my eyes?

4.

I spake: when lo! the hand of love  
Retouch'd the sounding door;  
Then all the tender passions strove  
With force unfelt before!

5.

In haste I rose t' admit my royal guest,  
While flush'd with hope my cheeks like roses bloom'd;  
With unct'ous hand the yielding lock I press'd,  
And pow'rful sweets the midnight air perfum'd;  
Pure liquid myrrh my fragrant fingers shed,  
And o'er the handles of the bolt it spread.

6.

I open'd to my royal love,  
But he was far away;  
My soul with sad emotions strove,  
And fail'd with dire dismay!  
His parting words, engraven on my mind,  
Sunk deep, and left a lasting sting behind.  
Long while, oppress'd with anxious thought,  
I sought him—but in vain I sought!  
I call'd him—but no kind reply  
Return'd he to my plaintive cry.

7.

The watchmen found me; with relentless blows  
They smote me, mocking at my silent woes;  
Down from the tow'ring walls the keepers flew,  
And the close veil from off my temples drew:  
No more conceal'd I mock'd their prying sight,

But stood confest, 'mid gleams of borrow'd light;  
For splendid lamps their trembling rays display'd,  
With varying lustres, through the midnight shade.

8.

I charge you, O ye virgin throng!  
If my belov'd shou'd pass along,  
While you around the city rove,  
O tell him I am sick of love!

VIRGINS of JERUSALEM (*to the QUEEN*).

9.

What is thy beloved? say,  
Thou fairest of the fair!  
What sov'reign charms does he display,  
That claim such earnest care?  
What is thy beloved, say,  
More than another's love?  
Superiour darts his potent ray  
Salem's bright sons above?  
Stands he distinguish'd noble youths among,  
When fair perfection gilds the blooming throng?

JEWISH QUEEN, *in reply (describing the charms of her royal lover.)*

10.

My love is white, and ruddy as the morn,  
Radiant as those whom bridal vests adorn,  
When silver lamps pour round their fulgid rays,  
And tissued robes reflect the dazzling blaze.

11.

As gold resplendent shines his royal head,  
His raven locks o'er his fair shoulders spread,  
The floating ringlets wanton in the wind,  
Salute his cheek, or, graceful, fall behind.

12.

His eyes are as the eyes of milk-white doves;  
Which woo, by swelling streams, their plumy loves;  
Peaceful they sit the ample floods beside,  
And cooing sip the waters as they glide.

13.

His downy cheeks are like a spicy bed,  
Whence choicest aromatics rise,  
Which, sweetly budding forth, unceasing spread  
Their rich effluvia through the skies.  
His lips are lilies dropping honey-dew,  
Ting'd with the ruby's animated hue.

14.

His hands are rings of gold, where dazzling glows  
The yellow chrysolite in sparkling rows.  
Like purest iv'ry, delicately white,  
Appears his waist, with snowy tunick dight;  
The snowy tunick, edg'd with gold and blue,  
Like radiant sapphires glitters to the view.

15.

His comely legs, like marble pillars shine,  
Round which, with art, the linen draw'rs entwine;  
Below the draw'rs rich sandals we behold,  
Like finished pedestals of burnish'd gold.  
Majestic as those cedars that arise  
From Lebanon's exalted height,  
Pushing their verdant branches to the skies,  
With native excellence bedight,  
Beams his fair countenance, with grace replete,  
Awfully mild, majestically sweet!

16.

His mouth is fragrance, such as flows,  
When morning breathes, from dewy rose;  
Yea, he is lovely as the dawning day!



Such is my royal friend, ye tuneful throng,

Such is my best-belov'd! O virgins, say,  
Mark'd ye such charms Salem's bright  
sons among?

VIRGINS of JERUSALEM.

V. 1.

O where is thy belovéd stray'd?  
Thou fairest of the fair!  
Say shall we seek him down the glade,  
And tell thy tender care?  
O whither is he turn'd aside?  
Perchance to hear the warbling stream-  
lets glide;  
Say, shall we seek him with thee there,  
When dews descending cool the sultry  
air?

JEWISH QUEEN (*to her Attendants*).

2.

My love is, doubtless, in his garden  
straying,  
Or 'neath thick trees, on beds of spices  
playing;  
Full oft 'tis his, when ev'ning shades  
prevail,  
To gather lilies in yon humid vale.

3.

I am my love's and he is mine!  
Why does he from truth's path decline?  
And roving seek, when ev'ning shades  
prevail,  
To feed among the lilies of the vale?

END of CANTO the FIFTH.

DAY THE SIXTH.

SCENE—*A Garden belonging to the royal  
Palace of Solomon.*

SOLOMON and the SPOUSE (*with their  
Attendants.*)

CANTO THE SIXTH.

(*Time—Morning*).

SOLOMON to the SPOUSE.

4.

O! Thou art beautiful, my love,  
As Tirzah, tow'ring o'er the grove  
New gilt with morning light;  
On her gay tow'rs the purple radiance  
plays,  
And kindling domes reflect the fulgent  
rays:  
Tirzah, the scene of pleasure and de-  
light!  
Graceful art thou as Salem to mine eye,  
(Salem, the seat of regal majesty)  
Whose fair perfection future bards shall  
sing,  
When all-inspir'd, they sweep the silver  
string.  
Dazzling, in these thy bridal vests ar-  
ray'd,  
Thou beam'st as lamps, resplendent  
through the shade.

5.

Avert thine eyes!—a fatal dart  
Has found, and vanquish'd all my heart!  
Ah! quick the tender passions rise!  
I die!—avert those piercing eyes,  
Thine auburn hair in graceful tresses  
flows,  
Shading thy cheeks, more vermeil than  
the rose;  
Such glossy locks Mount Gilead's goats  
adorn,  
As sleek, ascending at the break of day,  
Refresh'd, they catch the balmy breeze  
of morn,  
And up the pointed rocks with added  
vigour stray.

6.

Thy pearly teeth are like a snowy flock  
Of sheep, ascending from the argent tide,  
(Where, from the basis of the craggy  
rock,  
The rapid streams in brisk meandrings  
glide)  
Which all are twins, none mourns it's  
fellow lost,  
Or drooping on the plain, or on the  
white wave tost.



## 7.

Behind thy veil, what vivid red  
Is o'er each radiant temple spread!  
So glows the gay pomegranate's purple  
hue,  
When the bright sections open to the  
view.

## 8.

I've threescore queens, of beauty bright,  
And fourscore concubines, as fair,  
With tuneful virgins clad in shining  
white,  
Who sweep the warbling strings, and  
trill the dulcet air.

## 9.

But she, my dove, my undefil'd,  
Admits no proud compeer;  
Dear to my soul as is an *only child*  
To her fond parent dear;  
Alone she reigns within this ardent  
breast,  
A constant, pleasing, unremitted guest.  
The virgin-daughters saw my love,  
And blest her in their song;  
The queens, amaz'd, beheld her move  
With majesty along,  
And join'd the concubines! One gen'ral  
voice  
Then rose to swell her praise, and cele-  
brate my choice.

SCENE THE SECOND—*The Garden.*

*The Jewish Queen enters the Garden  
with her Attendants, richly dressed  
and ornamented.*

SOLOMON (*in surprise, on seeing his  
JEWISH QUEEN approaching.*)

## 10.

But who is she that moves with princely  
gait,  
And onward comes in this majestic  
state?  
Clear as the morn, bedeckt with orient  
light,  
She shines confest, and radiates on the  
sight!  
Fair as the moon, in argent splendours  
drest,

Bright as the sun, inrob'd in golden  
vest!  
Dazzling as brides, in nuptial pomp ar-  
ray'd,  
Beaming effulgent through the midnight  
shade!  
When flaming lamps with vivid lustres  
blaze,  
And tissued robes reflect the vary'd  
rays;  
When gold and gems, inkindling to the  
sight,  
With brilliant sparkles chear the brow  
of night.

SOLOMON (*to his JEWISH QUEEN.*)

## 11.

Hither I come, the garden's bloom to  
view;  
Descending slowly through the  
length'ning vale,  
I mark it's fruits, enrich'd with morn-  
ing dew,  
While the light foliage trembles with  
the gale:  
If the flow'ring vine appear,  
Peeping fost'ring boughs between,  
Raptur'd, oft I find it here,  
Scenting all the neighb'ring scene;  
Here the pomegranates feel the  
genial ray,  
And swell the bud, expanding to  
the day.

JEWISH QUEEN, *in reply (preparing to  
quit the Garden.)*

## 12.

I knew it not! my weak unstable mind,  
In quest of peace, to solitude inclin'd;  
But now, convinced, my soul prepares  
for flight;  
Adieu! behold me hast'ning from thy  
sight,  
Quick as the chariot thunders o'er the  
plain,  
When Ammi-nadib holds the glowing  
rein.

NOBLES of ZION (*to the QUEEN retiring.*)

13.

Return! return! O Shulamite, return!  
Let not our hearts with expectation  
burn;  
Return! return! that we may look on  
thee—

VIRGINS of JERUSALEM (*to the NOBLES.*)

What wish ye in the Shulamite to see?

NOBLES of ZION.

We wish to see two friendly troops  
unite,  
That each glad heart, replete with gay  
delight,  
May it's sensations cheerfully impart,  
And send them, glowing, to it's fellow  
heart.

SCENE THE THIRD—*A Chiosk in the  
Royal Garden.*

SOLOMON, *the JEWISH QUEEN, and their  
Attendants.*

(*Time—Evening.*)

CHAP. VII.

V. 1.

SOLOMON.

How beautiful thy feet, O noble fair!  
Adorn'd with sandals, wrought with  
nicest care,  
Where gold, and threads of variegated  
hues,  
Thy captiv'd lover all-inraptur'd views;  
Thy stately legs the curious draw'rs in-  
fold,  
Deckt as with graven ornaments of gold,  
Where by the toilsome artist's steady  
hand  
The mimic buds, and leaves and flow'rs  
expand.

2.

Thy clasp is like a goblet round,  
Where mingled liquors play,  
When wines, with mantling rubies  
crown'd,  
Reflect the changeful ray:

Thy waist is like an heap of golden  
grain,  
With lilies bounded, rising from the  
plain.

3.

Thy two fair breasts like two young  
roes appear,  
The tender daughters of the vernal year.

4.

Thy taper neck, inimitably fair!  
Nature has form'd with more than usual  
care;  
From thy fine shoulders we behold it  
rise  
Like some white tow'r ascending from  
the ground,  
Whose lofty summit shoots into the  
skies,  
Still less'ning to the view it's spiring  
round.  
Thy large full eyes with humid lustre  
shine,  
Like Heshbon's ample pools, unstain'd  
and clear,  
Serenely mild, and amiably benign,  
The faithful tokens of a heart sincere.  
Thy nose arises with resistless grace,  
Diffusing majesty o'er all thy face:  
Such grace adorns fam'd Lebanon's high  
tow'r,  
Whose just proportion charms the judg-  
ing view,  
Which stands a monument of regal  
pow'r,  
Rais'd with nice art, commensurate and  
true.

5.

Thy stately head, majestically high!  
With various flowrets elegantly grac'd,  
Of ev'ry shade, and ev'ry vivid dye,  
With wondrous skill and lively fancy  
plac'd,  
Appears like Carmel's top, with verdure  
crown'd,  
Where flow'rs, and plants, and od'rous  
shrubs abound.  
Thy plaited hair in gaudy tresses flows,  
As in the crystal wave the royal purple  
glows.

6.

How beautiful art thou, my love!  
How charming to the sight!  
More fragrant than the spicy grove,  
And form'd for soft delight.

7.

Pleas'd, I behold thy graceful stature  
rise,  
As some straight palm-tree, of majestic  
size:

8.

I said, with ardent love possess,  
Up to this stately palm I'll go,  
And clasp her clusters to my breast,  
Her clusters rich, where dates luxuriant  
grow:

Like clusters of the vine thy breasts ap-  
pear

Through the light gauze, too exquisitely  
clear!

More sweet the breath thy fragrant nose  
exhales,

Than citron grove, refresh'd by morning  
gales.

9.

Thy speech is like the choicest wine,

That moves itself aright,

When royal favourites incline

To revel through the night:

Full oft, when morning's ruddy beams  
arise,

And pond'rous sleep weighs down their  
glowing eyes,

The slumb'ers, warm with the inspiring  
draught,

Pour forth, in mutt'ring sounds, the half-  
form'd thought.

*The JEWISH QUEEN to SOLOMON (ex-  
pressing great joy at the appear-  
ance of his returning love.)*

10.

Yes, my belovéd, I am thine,

He feels th' accustom'd fire!

His eyes with mild forgiveness shine,

Commixt with soft desire.

11.

Come then, my love, let's seek the field,  
Where op'ning flow'rs their odours  
yield;

Let us in some lone village rest,  
With peace, and joy, and rapture blest.

12.

Then we'll rise at early dawn,

(Lightly tripping o'er the lawn)

Marking off the vineyard's bloom,

Breathing fresh it's rich perfume;

If the flow'rets on the vine,

Tipt with recent dew-drops shine;

If the tender grapes are seen,

Peeping through the foliage green;

If the pomegranates feel the genial ray.

And swell the bud, expanding to the day.

There, 'mid the umbrage of incircling  
groves,

I mean to bless thee with my tend'rest  
loves.

13.

The ripen'd mandrakes scent the air,

And near our gates are seen,

All precious plants, and flow'rets rare,

That blush along the green;

For thee, my love, these plants were  
taught to rise,

These flow'rs to bloom in variegated  
dyes.

END of CANTO the SIXTH.

DAY THE SEVENTH.

SCENE—*A Garden belonging to the  
Royal Palace.*

JEWISH QUEEN and ATTENDANTS.

CANTO THE SEVENTH.

(Time—Morning.)

JEWISH QUEEN (*speaking of SOLOMON.*)

V. 1.

O that thou wert as my fond brother  
near!

Whose kindred soul with mutual ar-  
dour glows,

Whose glist'ning eye pours forth the  
pitying tear,

Awake, and present to a sister's woes:  
Then should I find thee in the public  
street,

O! I would kiss thee with a sister's  
kiss;

For sisters thus their darling brothers  
greet,

Nor crouds, reproachful, judge the deed  
amiss.

## 2.

Yea, I wou'd lead thee to my mother's gate,  
 Void of pale jealousy and anxious fear;  
 There wou'dst thou freely all thy thoughts relate,  
 Pouring instruction through my list'ning ear;  
 While, grateful, I wou'd high-spiced wine produce,  
 Refreshing cordial to the weary soul;  
 Or, if thy thirst require the acid juice,  
 Pomegranates tart should crown the mantling bowl.

## 3.

O that his left hand now were laid  
 Under my sad desponding head;  
 And that his right hand did sustain  
 Me, sinking 'neath my love-sick pain!

*The QUEEN (addressing herself to the DAUGHTERS of JERUSALEM.)*

## 4.

I've charg'd you oft, O virgin throng!  
 To drop the cadence of your song,  
 And still with cautious steps to move,  
 Lest ye shou'd wake my sleeping love.

SCENE the SECOND—*The Palace Garden.*

JEWISH QUEEN and her ATTENDANTS.

SOLOMON and the SPOUSE approaching,  
 with the NOBLES of ZION, and  
 EGYPTIAN VIRGINS.

(Time—Evening.)

JEWISH QUEEN.

## 5.

Be still, my soul!—lo! she ascends  
 From where the wilderness extends!  
 Again she comes! Behold the splendid train,  
 With added pomp and dignity elate,  
 Advancing slowly o'er the neighb'ring plain,  
 Lo! I behold her join her royal mate!

SOLOMON (*to the JEWISH QUEEN.*)

Peace, gentle fair one! in your citron-grove,  
 Did I not thee excite to mutual love?  
 'Twas there, one morn, beneath our fav'rite tree,  
 Thy prudent mother took a pledge for thee:  
 'Twas there the darling boon she did impart,  
 And bound thee, blushing, to my panting heart.

JEWISH QUEEN.

## 6.

O! set me as a signet on that breast,  
 And bid my name, in lasting lines im-  
 prest  
 On some bright seal, in glowing traces rise,  
 Beam from thine arm, and catch thy roving eyes!  
 For mighty love is strong as death,  
 If jealousy, with fervid breath,  
 Impel the rising fire:  
 Fell jealousy is cruel as the grave,  
 None from it's fangs the tortur'd heart can save.  
 Imprest with doubt, led on by soft desire:  
 The darts thereof are fiery darts,  
 Quick they assail unguarded hearts,  
 And burn with veh'mence there:  
 So, quick the missive arrow flies,  
 Impulsive, through the yielding skies,  
 And with it's rapid motion kindles in the air.

## 7.

When potent love assails the human breast,  
 In vain for peace we seek, in vain for rest;  
 Not mighty waters can it's pow'r control,  
 Nor floods impetuous mitigate it's force;  
 But unassuag'd, it vanquishes the soul,  
 And, unimpair'd, maintains it's furious course;  
 Wou'd the rich man his ample wealth impart,  
 To bind in golden chains the free-born heart,

Still unavailing wou'd his treasures  
prove;  
"For love—love only—is the price of  
love."

*The JEWISH QUEEN (speaking of the  
SPOUSE.)*

8.

We have (you know) a little sister fair,  
Whose infant worth demands our tender  
care;  
Though yet unform'd, no dawning beau-  
ties glow,  
On swelling hills of animated snow:  
What shall we for this little sister do,  
When royal lovers come (at length) to  
woo?

*SOLOMON (to the JEWISH QUEEN.)*

9.

To us she is a guardian wall—  
A bulwark to this realm of mine;  
We'll build on her the turrets tall,  
With burnisht silver taught to shine;  
A door to us this sister's found,  
Enclose her then with cedar round:  
Through her, rich commerce opes her  
hand,  
And deals out plenty through the land.

*The SPOUSE (to the JEWISH QUEEN.)*

10.

I am indeed a guardian wall,  
Adorn'd with turrets fair and tall;  
For here, behold, twin beauties glow,  
On hills of animated snow;  
Therefore he markt me with the eye of  
love.  
And rais'd my head the envying crowds  
above.

11.

Solomon has a vineyard rare,  
In rich Baal-hamon's plain;  
To keepers he assigns the care,  
Who bring th' appointed gain:

Each, for the fruit thereof, to Salem's  
King,  
Must year by year a thousand shekels  
bring.

12.

My vineyard, which ere-while was mine,  
And blooms in yonder vale,  
(But now, O Solomon! is thine)  
A thousand brings, by tale;  
Two hundred shekels more, to those  
whose eyes  
Watch the choice products as they an-  
nual rise.

*SOLOMON (to the JEWISH QUEEN, de-  
manding her final answer respect-  
ing her future conduct towards him.)*

13.

O thou! that in the gardens seek'st to  
dwell,  
Haunting the grot, and solitary cell;  
Speak now, the dictates of thy mind  
declare,  
The friendly company, prepar'd to hear,  
In silence wrapt, await thy final voice;  
Cause me to hear it; bid my soul re-  
joice.

*JEWISH QUEEN (to SOLOMON, signifying  
her firm resolution of keeping her  
distance.)*

14.

Flee, once-belov'd! quick hasten from  
my sight,  
New charms attract thee, and new joys  
invite:  
For me, alas! for me what now remains?  
To roam neglected on far distant plains!  
Flee, once-belov'd! quick hasten from  
my sight,  
Like a young hart, or like a bounding  
roe,  
Which climbs with agile feet the airy  
height  
Where od'rous plants in rich profusion  
grow;  
Where aromatic shrubs luxuriant bloom,  
And trees balsamic shed their choice per-  
fume.

ANN FRANCIS,  
[Published London 1781.]





# BELSHAZZAR

A DRAMATIC POEM



# BELSHAZZAR

## A DRAMATIC POEM.

### CHARACTERS.

THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

BELSHAZZAR.

ARIOCH, *Captain of the Guard.*

SABARIS, *Chief Eunuch.*

KALASSAN, *High Priest of Bel.*

DANIEL,

IMLAH, *Jews.*

ADONIJAH.

NITOCRIS, *Mother of Belshazzar.*

NAOMI.

BENINA.

*Babylonian Nobles—Priests—Diviners—  
Astrologers, &c.  
Scene—Babylon.*

*The City of Babylon—Morning.*

### THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

WITHIN the cloud-pavilion of my rest,  
Amid the Thrones and Princedoms,  
that await

Their hour of ministration to the Lord,  
I heard the summons, and I stood with  
wings

Outspread for flight, before the Eternal  
Throne.

And, from the unapproachéd depth of  
light

Wherein the Almighty Father of the  
worlds

Dwells, from seraphic sight by glory  
veil'd,

Came forth the soundless mandate,  
which I felt

Within, and sprung upon my obedient  
plumes.

But as I sail'd my long and trackless  
voyage

Down the deep bosom of unbounded  
space,

The manifest bearer of Almighty wrath,  
I saw the Angel of each separate star  
Folding his wings in terror, o'er his  
orb

Of golden fire; and shuddering till I  
pass'd

To pour elsewhere Jehovah's cup of  
vengeance.

And now I stand upon this world of  
man,

My wonted resting place.—But thou,  
oh Earth!

Thou only dost endure my fatal pres-  
ence

Undaunted. As of old, I hover o'er  
This haughty city of Chaldean Bel,  
That not the less pours forth her festal  
pomp

To do unholy worship to her Gods,  
That are not Gods, but works of mortal  
hands.

Behold! the Sun hath burst the East-  
ern gates,

And all his splendour floods the tower'd  
walls,

Upon whose wide immeasurable circuit  
The harnessed chariots crowd in long  
array.

Down every stately line of pillar'd  
street,

To each of the hundred brazen gates,  
young men

And flower-crown'd maidens, lead the  
mazy dance.

Here the vast Palace, whence yon airy  
gardens

Spread round, and to the morning airs  
hang forth

Their golden fruits and dewy opening  
flowers;

While still the low mists creep, in lazy-  
folds,

O'er the house-tops beneath. In every  
court,

Through every portal, throng, in servile haste,  
 Captains and Nobles. There, before the Temple,  
 On the far side of wide Euphrates' stream,  
 The Priests of Bel their impious rites prepare:  
 And cymbal clang, and glittering dulcimer,  
 With shrill melodious salutation, hail  
 The welcome morn, awakening all the City  
 To the last dawn that e'er shall gladden her.  
 Babylon! that wak'st in pride  
 And glory, but shalt sleep in shapeless ruin,  
 Thus, with my broad and overshadowing wings,  
 I do embrace thee for mine own; forbidding,  
 Even at this instant, yon bright orient Sun,  
 To shed his splendours on thy lofty streets.  
 Oh, Desolation's sacred place, as now  
 Thou'rt darken'd, shall the darkness of the dead  
 Enwrap thee in its everlasting shade!  
 Babylon! Babylon! upon the wreck  
 Of that most impious tower your Fathers rear'd  
 To scale the crystal battlements of Heaven,  
 I set my foot, here take my gloomy rest  
 Even till that hour be come, that comes full soon.

*Before the Temple.*

KALASSAN—THE PRIESTS.

FIRST PRIEST.

Didst thou behold it?

SECOND PRIEST.

What?

FIRST PRIEST.

'Tis gone, 'tis past—

And yet but now 'twas there, a cloudy darkness,  
 That, swallowing up the rays of the orient Sun,  
 Cast back a terrible night o'er all the City.

THIRD PRIEST.

Who stands aghast at this triumphant hour?  
 I tell thee that our Dreamers have beheld  
 Majestic visions. The besieging Mede  
 Was cast, with all his chariots, steeds, and men,  
 Into Euphrates' bosom.

KALASSAN.

Do ye marvel  
 But now that it was dark? yon orient Sun,  
 The Lord of light, withdrew his dawning beams,  
 Till he could see the glory of the world,  
 Belshazzar, in his gilded galley riding  
 Across Euphrates.

FIRST PRIEST.

Give command that all  
 The brazen gates along the river side,  
 Stand open to receive the suppliant train.

SECOND PRIEST.

Hark! with the trumpet sound their strong recoil  
 Upon their grating hinges harshly mingles.

THIRD PRIEST.

Lo! how the bridge is groaning with the gifts  
 Of the great King. The camels bow their heads  
 Beneath the bright and odorous load they bear;  
 The proud steeds toss their flower-enwoven manes,  
 And the cars rattle with their ponderous sound;  
 While, silent, the slow elephants pursue  
 Their wondering way, and bear their crowded towers,  
 Widely reflected on the argent stream.

## FOURTH PRIEST.

How proudly do the waters toss and foam  
 Before the barges, that with gilded  
 prows  
 Set the pale spray on fire! The rowers,  
 clad  
 In Egypt's finest tunics, as they strike  
 The waters with their palmy oars,  
 awake  
 Sweet music, as it seems, from all the  
 tide;  
 So exquisitely to the dashing strokes  
 Are the sweet lutes and floating haut-  
 boys timed.

## FIRST PRIEST.

Yon bark, in which, at times, the silken  
 curtains  
 Are by the courteous breezes fann'd  
 aside,  
 Is that in which the Mother of the  
 mightiest,  
 Nitocris, sits. Her presence seems to  
 awe  
 At once, and give a pride to those who  
 row  
 Her queenly state—

## KALASSAN.

Behind—'tis he!—'tis he!—  
 Belshazzar's self—the waters crowd  
 around,  
 As though ambitious to reflect their  
 Sovereign;  
 And all the throng'd and living shores,  
 that now  
 To the far limits of the City, pass'd  
 His name in one long shout, have  
 paused to hear  
 Our loftier homage.—Are the Seventy  
 here?

## FIRST PRIEST.

All.

## KALASSAN.

Lift we, then, the solemn strain, in  
 praise  
 Of the great King, and all the suppliant  
 court  
 Will answer us in praise of mightiest  
 Bel.

## SONG OF THE PRIESTS.

Where are the thousand-thronéd kings,  
 Beneath whose empires' spacious wings,  
 The wide earth lay in mute repose?  
 He rose—Chaldea's King arose!  
 And bow'd was every crownéd head,  
 And every marshall'd army fled;  
 Before his footstool bow'd they down,  
 The all-conquering Lord of Babylon!

## SONG OF THE SUPPLIANTS.

Where are the thousand-shrinéd Gods,  
 Within whose temples' proud abodes  
 The nations crowded to invoke?  
 He woke, Chaldea's God awoke!  
 And mute was every sumptuous feast,  
 And rite, and song, and victim ceased;  
 And every Fane was overthrown,  
 Before the God of Babylon!

## PRIESTS.

Ammon's crested pride lay low,  
 And broke was Elam's hornéd bow;  
 Damascus heard the ponderous fall  
 Of old Benhadad's palace wall;  
 The ocean reddened with the fire  
 From the rock-built strengths of Tyre.  
 False was fierce Philistia's trust,  
 Desert Moab mourns in dust.  
 Lo! in chains our Captains bring  
 Haughty Zion's eyeless King.  
 Kedar's tents are struck, her bands  
 Scatter'd o'er her burning sands,  
 And Egypt's Pharaoh quails before  
 The Assyrian Lion's conquering roar.

## THE SUPPLIANTS.

From his high Philistine fane,  
 Sea-born Dagon fled amain;  
 Moloch, he whose valley stood  
 Deep with infant's blameless blood:  
 Chemos, struck with pale affright,  
 Left his foul unfinish'd rite.  
 Her waning moon Astarte veil'd,  
 When the Tyrian's sea-wall fail'd.  
 In vain Damascus' children meet  
 At lofty Rimmon's molten feet.  
 And vain were Judah's prayers to him,  
 Between the golden Cherubim;  
 In vain the Arab, in his flight,  
 Call'd on the glittering stars of night;  
 In vain the Arab, in his flight,  
 Call'd on the glittering stars of night;  
 And vain Osiris' timbrels blew  
 Over Egypt's maddening crew.

## KALASSAN.

Lord of the world, and of the eternal  
city,  
That wear'st Chaldea's regal diadem  
Wreath'd with Assyria's, wherefore art  
thou here  
Before the Temple of all-powerful Bel?

## BELSHAZZAR.

Chief of the Seventy chosen Priests,  
that serve  
Within the Temple of our God, thou  
know'st  
That the rebellious Mede, confederate  
With Ashkenaz and Elam, and the  
might  
Of Persia, hath begirt with insolent  
siege  
Our city walls, and I would know what  
swift  
And terrible vengeance is ordain'd on  
high  
For the revolted from Chaldea's sway?

## KALASSAN.

Live thou, oh King, for ever! We are  
holding  
This day our solemn rite. Our Priests  
and Seers  
Each at his office stands throughout the  
Temple;  
And all our eight ascending towers that  
rise,  
Each above each, in heavenward range,  
are throng'd  
With those that strike the cymbal, and  
with voice  
And mystic music summon down the  
Gods  
To give us answer.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Priests of Bel, and thou  
High mitred Chief, Kalassan! Lo, I  
bring  
Gifts worthy of the Gods and of Bel-  
shazzar;  
All that the world in its vast homage  
casts  
Before our royal feet; the gold that  
flows  
In the red waters of the farthest East;

The fragrant balm that weeps from glit-  
tering trees;  
The ivory, and the thin and snowy  
robes  
Of Egypt; and the purple merchandize  
Of Sidon; and the skins of beasts that  
far  
In the dark forests fly the sight of man,  
Yet not so far but that Assyria's ser-  
vants  
Track them, and rend away their bloody  
tribute;  
And slaves of every hue, and every  
age,  
From all the kingdoms of our rule.

## KALASSAN.

Great King,  
What answer wouldst thou, which such  
sumptuous offerings  
May not compel!

## BELSHAZZAR.

Declare ye to our Gods,  
Thus saith Belshazzar: wherefore am I  
call'd  
The King of Babylon, the scepter'd heir  
Of Nabonassar's sway, if still my sight  
Must be infested by rebellious arms,  
That hem my city round; and frantic  
cries  
Of onset, and the braying din of battle  
Disturb my sweet and wonted festal  
songs?

## NITOCRIS.

In the Gods' name, and in mine own, I  
answer!  
When Nabonassar's heir shall take the  
sword  
Of Nabonassar in his valiant hand;  
With the inborn awe of majesty appal  
Into the dust Rebellion's crested front:  
When for the gliding bark on the  
smooth waters,  
Whose motion doth but lull his silken  
couch,  
He mounts the rushing chariot, and in  
arms  
Asserts himself the lord of human kind.

## SABARIS.

Will he endure it?



## NITOCRIS.

Oh, my son! my son!

Must I repent me of that thrill of joy  
I felt, when round my couch the slaves  
proclaim'd

I had brought forth a man into the  
world,

A child for empire born, the cradled  
Lord

Of Nations—oh, my son!—and all the  
pride

With which I saw thy fair and open  
brow

Expand in beauteous haughtiness, com-  
manding

Ere thou could'st speak? And with thy  
growth, thy greatness

Still ripen'd: like the palm amid the  
grove

Thou stood'st, the loftiest, at once, and  
comeliest

Of all the sons of men. And must I  
now

Wish all my pangs upon a shapeless off-  
spring,

Or on a soft and dainty maiden wasted.  
That might have been, if not herself,  
like her

Thy martial ancestress, Semiramis,  
Mightiest—at least the Mother of the  
Mighty?

## BELSHAZZAR.

Queen of Assyria, Nabonassar's  
daughter!

Wife of my royal father, Merodach!  
Greater than all, from whom myself  
was born!

The Gods that made thee mother of  
Belshazzar,

Have arm'd thee with a dangerous li-  
cence. Thou,

Secure, may'st utter what from meaner  
lips

Had call'd upon the head the indignant  
sword

Of Justice. But to thee we deign re-  
ply.

Is 't not the charge of the great Gods  
t' uphold

The splendour of the world that doth  
them homage?

As soon would they permit the all-  
glorious Sun

To wither from their palace vault in  
heaven,

As this rich empire from the earth.

## NITOCRIS.

And therefore

Be as the Gods, Belshazzar, and stand  
forth

To sweep away the desolating foe!

As when the thunders scatter all abroad  
The lowering clouds at midnight, all

the stars  
Look glittering through the bright pel-  
lucid sky,

And in the glorious calm themselves  
have strew'd,

Repose triumphant the great Gods.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Oh, queen!

The mother of Chaldea's royal lord  
Ne'er ask'd in vain. Myself this day  
will mount

The car of battle, and along the walls  
Display my terrors, for Assyria's hosts

To kindle into valour at my presence;  
And the pale rebels from their distant

camp,  
Like hunters that have roused the sleep-  
ing lion,

Snatch up their toils, and fly—

## NITROCIS.

Along the walls!

And not along the dusty battle plain?

Yet 'tis enough—the fire but sleeps  
within thee.

And as the warhorse that hath sported  
long

On the green meads, beholds the flash  
of arms

Bright on the fountain where he bathes,  
and hears

The martial trumpet sounding, start  
erect

His kindling ears, his agitated mane  
Trembles; already on his back he feels

The gorgeous trappings and the armed  
rider,

And treads the sward as though he  
trampled down

Whole hosts before him; thus Bel-  
shazzar's soul,

At sight of Babylon's exulting foes,

Shall waken to the warrior's noble  
wrath.

BELSHAZZAR.

Give instant order!

NITROCIS.

Oh, tiara'd Mede!  
And thou fierce Persian that dost boast  
thyself  
As hardy as thy native mountains!  
Thou,  
The shepherd's nursling, Cyrus! feel  
ye not  
A prescient terror of your coming con-  
queror?  
The towers with which ye have girt  
your spacious camp,  
Do they not rock even to their deep  
foundations,  
In conscious awe? But thou, my noble  
son!  
Thy mother's heart, that beat but in  
thy presence,  
Even when thou laid'st in soft inglori-  
ous dalliance,  
When home thou com'st, high plumed  
with victory, hosts  
In chains around thee, and the routed  
armies  
Crowding to gaze upon their conqueror.  
As though it were a solace in their fall  
That great Belshazzar stoop'd to over-  
throw them;  
When all the myriads of vast Babylon  
Shout in the triumph of their kingly  
lord;  
That heart, my son, with such excess  
of pride  
Will swell, that it will burst. Even  
now it fills  
My woman's eyes with tears: when I  
should wear  
A brow all rapture, I can only weep.

KALASSAN.

Lord of the Nations! with our richest  
rites  
Do we propitiate the eternal Gods.  
Upon the golden altar, never wet  
Save with the immaculate blood of  
yearling lambs  
We sacrifice—and on our topmost  
tower,  
Where, on his couch, amid his native  
clouds,

The God reposes, must the chosen Vir-  
gin,  
Whom to our wandering search he  
first presents,  
Await the bright descending Deity.

BELSHAZZAR.

What then!—the Gods hold festival to-  
night!  
And shall the courts of great Chaldea's  
palace  
Be silent of the festal song? At eve  
Our banquet shall begin; and dusky  
night,  
Astonish'd at our splendour, think his  
reign  
Usurp'd as by a brighter day. Kalas-  
san!  
Whence are those golden vessels richly  
carved,  
And bossy with enchased fruits and  
flowers;  
Goblets, and lavers, and tall chandeliers,  
That, like to blossoming almond trees,  
branch out  
In knots of glittering silver?—meet  
were they  
To minister at great Belshazzar's feast.

KALASSAN.

King of the Universe! those vessels  
stood  
Erst in the Temple of the Hebrew's  
God;  
But when Chaldea's arms laid waste the  
City,  
And from their Temple, with destroy-  
ing fire,  
Scar'd the unresisting Deity, the spoils  
Were seiz'd, and consecrate to mightier  
Bel.

BELSHAZZAR.

Let them be borne to grace our feast!

KALASSAN.

Most honour'd  
Were they by such a noble profanation!  
Give ye the order—  
Ha! what frantic shriek  
Peals through the courts?

PRIEST.

The slaves that girt themselves  
To bear those vessels, on a sudden, all,

As though by viewless lightnings struck  
to earth,  
Lie groveling on the pavement, and  
they clench  
Their vacant hands in horror.

KALASSAN.

Raise them up,  
And lash them to their duty.

SECOND PRIEST.

King of Earth!  
The armed statue of thy ancestor,  
Great Nabonassar, on its firm-set pedestal  
Shakes, and its marble panoply resounds  
Like distant thunder!

KALASSAN.

How! the pavement rocks  
Beneath our feet, like a tempestuous  
sea!

BELSHAZZAR.

What! are Belshazzar's mandates thus  
delay'd  
For the pale fear of slaves, and idle  
sounds  
That shake the earth, but not his kingly  
soul?  
Away with them! we will not brook  
remonstrance  
From vanquish'd men or Gods!—Away!  
I say—

CHORUS.

Sovereign of all the streams that flow  
From hills of everlasting snow,  
Through vast Chaldea's fertile reign,  
Down to the red and pearly main;  
And ere thy giant course is done,  
Through all imperial Babylon;  
By stately towers and palace fair,  
And blooming gardens hung in air;  
By every glowing brazen gate,  
Rollest thy full exulting state.  
Proud River! strew thy waves to rest.  
And smooth to peace thy azure breast,  
While slowly o'er thy willing tide,  
Belshazzar's gilded galleys ride.  
Hear, King of Floods! Euphrates, hear!  
And pay the homage of thy fear.

CHORUS OF SUPPLIANTS.

Sovereign of all the lamps that shine  
In yon empyreal arch divine,  
That roll'st through half the fiery day,  
O'er realms that own Chaldea's sway;  
O'er thrones whose monarchs wear her  
yoke,  
And cities by her conquest broke;  
Thou Sun, whose morning splendours  
dwell  
Upon the Temple towers of Bel,  
The quiver of thy noontide rays  
Exhaust in all their fiery blaze,  
Upon the cloud-aspiring throne  
Where rests the God of Babylon!  
So shall the God in glory come  
Down to his sumptuous earthly home.  
Hear! Monarch of the Planets! hear—  
And pause upon thy fleet career.

*The Quarter of the Jewish Slaves.*

IMLAH, NAOMI, BENINA.

BENINA.

Father! dear Father! said'st thou that  
our feet  
Shall tread the glittering paths of Sion's  
hill;  
And that our lips shall breathe the fra-  
grant airs  
That blow from dewy Hermon, and the  
fount  
Of Siloe flow in liquid music by us?

IMLAH.

Oh, daughter of captivity, and born  
To eat the bitter bread of servitude,  
Benina, child of sadness!—yet the  
dearer  
Because thou art the joy of desolate  
hearts  
That have no joy but thee!—what  
knowest thou  
Of that fair city where our fathers  
dwelt  
While unforsaken by their God?

BENINA.

My father!  
Have I not seen my mother and thy-  
self  
Sit by the river side, and dwell for ever  
On Salem's glories, and the Temple's  
pride,

Till tears have choked your sad though  
pleasant speech?

In the deep midnight, when our lords  
are sleeping,

I've seen the Brethren from the wil-  
lows take

Their wind-caress'd harps, their half-  
breath'd sounds

Scarce louder than the rippling river  
dash

Around the matted sedge; and still they  
pour'd

Their voices down the stream, as  
though they wish'd

Their songs to pass away to other  
lands

Beyond the bounds of their captivity.

I've listen'd in an ecstasy of tears,

Till purer waters seem'd to wander  
near me,

And sweeter flowers to bloom beneath  
my feet,

And towers of fairer structure to arise  
Under the moonlight; and I felt the joy  
Of freedom in my light and sportive  
limbs.

IMLAH.

My sweetest child, and thou that gav'st  
to me

This dearest treasure, Naomi, thyself,  
Even as thou wert in virgin loveliness

My plighted bride, renewed to tender-  
est youth!

I will not say I hope not (though my  
fears

And conscience of our ill desert re-  
prove me)

That God even now prepares the prom-  
ised hour,

When Israel shall shake off Assyria's  
chains,

And build long-wasted Sion's lovely  
walls.

The sands of the appointed years are  
run;

The signs break out, as in the cloudy  
night

The stars; and buried Prophets' voices  
seem

As from their graves to cry aloud, and  
mark

The hour that labours with our Israel's  
glory;

And, more than all, but yesterday I saw  
The holy Daniel—

NAOMI.

Daniel! what of him,

Dear Imlah?

IMLAH.

Till but lately he was girt

With sackcloth, with the meagre hue of  
fasting

On his sunk cheek, and ashes on his  
head;

When, lo! at once he shook from his  
gray locks

The attire of woe, and call'd for wine;  
and since

He hath gone stately through the won-  
dering streets

With a sad scorn. Amid the heaven-  
piercing towers,

Through cool luxurious courts, and in  
the shade

Of summer trees that play o'er crystal  
fountains,

He walks, as though he trod o'er moss-  
grown ruins,

'Mid the deep desolation of a city

Already by the almighty wrath laid  
waste.

And sometimes doth he gaze upon the  
clouds,

As though he recognized the viewless  
forms

Of arm'd destroyers in the silent skies.

And it is said, that at the dead of night  
He hath pour'd forth thy burden, Baby-  
lon,

And loud proclaim'd the bowing down  
of Bel,

The spoiling of the spoiler. Even our  
lords,

As conscious of God's glory gathering  
around him,

Look on him with a silent awe, nor  
dare

To check his motion, or reprove his  
speech.

NAOMI.

Oh, Imlah! shall our buried bones re-  
pose

In our own land?

BENINA.

Speak on, my dearest Father,

Thy words are like the breezes of the west,  
That breathe of Canaan's honey-flowing land.

IMLAH.

My child! my child! thy nuptials shall not be  
With song suppress'd, and dim half curtain'd lamp,  
Stol'n from the observance of our jealous lords,  
As mine and thy fond mother's were.—  
Who's here?

BENINA.

'Tis Adonijah: he hath heard thee name him,  
And he will see the burning on my cheek,  
And so detect our cause of fond discourse.

IMLAH.

I named him not—

BENINA.

Nay, father, now thou mock'st me.

IMLAH.

Alas! poor deer, thou'rt deeply stricken!  
Well—  
It is a noble boy, that dares to fear  
His God, nor makes his youth a privilege  
For license, and intemperate scorn of rule.

THE ABOVE, ADONIJAH.

IMLAH.

Whence com'st thou, Adonijah, with thy brow  
Elate, and full of pride, that scarce  
besems  
A captive?

ADONIJAH.

Imlah! from the dawn of day  
I have been gazing from the walls,  
and saw

The Persian reining in his fiery squadrons.

Like ostriches they swept the sandy plain,  
As though they would outstrip the tardy winds;

And paus'd and wheel'd, and through the clouds of dust  
That rose around them, as round terrible Angels,  
Their scimitars in silver radiance flash'd.

Oh, will it ever be, that once again  
The Lord of Hosts will lift the Lion banner

Of Judah, and her sons go forth to war

Like Joshua, or like him whose beardless strength  
O'erthrew the giant Philistine!

BENINA.

Ah, me!

And would'st thou, Adonijah, seek the war,  
The ruthless, murderous, and destroying war?

ADONIJAH.

Why, yes! nor would Benina love me less  
For bringing home the spoil of God's proud foes,  
To hang within his vindicated Temple.

BENINA.

So thou didst bring thyself unharm'd, unchanged,  
Benina were content.

ADONIJAH.

Heaven's blessings on thee!

IMLAH.

Hear me, young Adonijah; thou dost love  
My child: Benina, shall I say, or leave it  
To thine own lips or eloquent eyes to tell,  
How well thou lov'st the noble Adonijah?



But, youth, I seek not to delay thy joy  
 With the cold envious prudence of old  
     age,  
 That never felt the boiling blood of  
     youth;  
 For if I did, there's one would chide me  
     here  
 For my forgetfulness of hours like  
     these.  
 But yet I would not have my daughter  
     wed  
 With the sad dowry of a master's  
     stripes;  
 I would not, Adonijah, on the eve  
 Of our deliverance, that the wanton  
     Gentile  
 Should pass his jest on our cold enter-  
     tainment,  
 And all the cheerless joy when captives  
     wed,  
 To breed a race, whose sole inheritance  
 Shall be their parents' tasks and heavy  
     bondage  
 Our father Jacob served seven tardy  
     years  
 For beauteous Rachel, but I tax not  
     thee  
 With such a weary service.

ADONIJAH.

Be they ages,  
 So the life beat within this bounding  
     heart,  
 The love shall never fail!

IMLAH.

Here's one would trust thee,  
 Youth, should my cautious age be slow.  
 Come hither,  
 Thou tender vine, that need'st a noble  
     stem:  
 Thou not repin'st because I wed thee  
     not  
 To this fair elm, until the gentle airs  
 Of our own land, and those delicious  
     dews  
 That weep like angels' tears of love,  
     o'er all  
 The hill of Sion, gladden your sweet  
     union,  
 And make you bear your clustering  
     fruits in joy.  
 So now, enough, thou dost accept the  
     terms,

And in the name of Him that rules on  
     high,  
 I thus betroth the noble Adonijah  
 To soft Benina.—

Now, to him that hears  
 The captive's prayer. How long—oh,  
     Lord!—how long  
 Shall strangers trample down thy beau-  
     teous Sion?  
 How long shall Judah's hymns arise to  
     thee  
 On foreign winds, and sad Jerusalem  
 On all her hills be desolate and mute?

God of the Thunder! from whose  
     cloudy seat

The fiery winds of Desolation flow:  
 Father of Vengeance! that with purple  
     feet,

Like a full winepress, tread'st the  
     world below.

The embattled armies wait thy sign to  
     slay,

Nor springs the beast of havoc on his  
     prey,

Nor withering Famine walks his blasted  
     way,

Till thou the guilty land hast seal'd  
     for woe.

God of the Rainbow! at whose gracious  
     sign

The billows of the proud their rage  
     suppress:

Father of Mercies! at one word of  
     thine

An Eden blooms in the waste wilder-  
     ness!

And fountains sparkle in the arid sands,  
 And timbrels ring in maidens' glancing  
     hands,

And marble cities crown the laughing  
     lands,

And pillar'd temples rise thy name  
     to bless.

O'er Judah's land thy thunders broke—  
     oh, Lord!

The chariots rattled o'er her sunken  
     gate,

Her sons were wasted by the Assyrian  
     sword,

Even her foes wept to see her fallen  
     state;

And heaps her ivory palaces became,



Her Princes wore the captive's garb of  
shame,  
Her Temple sank amid the smouldering  
flame,  
For thou didst ride the tempest cloud  
of fate.

O'er Judah's land thy rainbow, Lord,  
shall beam,  
And the sad City lift her crownless  
head;  
And songs shall wake, and dancing foot-  
steps gleam,  
Where broods o'er fallen streets the  
silence of the dead.  
The sun shall shine on Salem's gilded  
towers,  
On Carmel's side our maidens cull the  
flowers,  
To deck, at blushing eve, their bridal  
bowers,  
And angel feet the glittering Sion  
tread.

Thy vengeance gave us to the stranger's  
hand,  
And Abraham's children were led  
forth for slaves;  
With fetter'd steps we left our pleasant  
land,  
Envying our fathers in their peaceful  
graves.  
The stranger's bread with bitter tears  
we steep,  
And when our weary eye should sink  
to sleep,  
'Neath the mute midnight we steal forth  
to weep,  
Where the pale willows shade Eu-  
phrates' waves.

The born in sorrow shall bring forth  
in joy;  
Thy mercy, Lord, shall lead thy chil-  
dren home;  
He that went forth a tender yearling  
boy,  
Yet, ere he die, to Salem's streets  
shall come.  
And Canaan's vines for us their fruits  
shall bear,  
And Hermon's bees their honied stores  
prepared;

And we shall kneel again in thankful  
prayer,  
Where, o'er the cherub-seated God,  
full blaz'd th' irradiate dome.

### THE WALLS OF BABYLON.

BELSHAZZAR IN HIS CHARIOT, NITOCRIS,  
ARIOCH, SABARIS, ETC.

BELSHAZZAR.

For twice three hours our stately cars  
have roll'd  
Along the broad highway that crowns  
the walls  
Of mine imperial City, nor complete  
Our circuit by a long and ample space.  
And still our eyes look down on gilded  
roofs,  
And towers and temples, and the  
spreading tops  
Of cedar groves, through which the  
fountains gleam;  
And everywhere the countless multi-  
tudes,  
Like summer insects in the noontide  
sun,  
Come forth to bask in our irradiate  
presence.  
Oh, thou vast Babylon! what mighty  
hand  
Created thee, and spread thee o'er the  
plain  
Capacious as a world; and girt thee  
round  
With high tower'd walls, and bound thy  
gates with brass;  
And taught the indignant river to en-  
dure  
Thy bridge of cedar and of palm, high  
hung  
Upon its marble piers? What voice  
proclaim'd,  
Amid the silence of the sands, "Arise!  
And be earth's wonder?" Was it not  
my fathers?  
Yea, mine entomb'd ancestors awake,  
Their heads uplift upon their marble  
pillows;  
They claim the glory of thy birth. Thou  
hunter,  
That didst disdain the quarry of the  
field,

Choosing thee out a nobler game of  
 man,  
 Nimrod! and thou that with unfem-  
 inine hand  
 Didst lash the coursers of thy battle-  
 car  
 O'er prostrate thrones, and necks of  
 captive kings,  
 Semiramis! and thou whose kingly  
 breath  
 Was like the desert wind, before its  
 coming  
 The people of all earth fell down, and  
 hid  
 Their humble faces in the dust! that  
 mad'st  
 The pastime of a summer day t' o'er-  
 throw  
 A city, or cast down some ancient  
 throne;  
 Whose voice each ocean shore obey'd,  
 and all  
 From sable Ethiopia to the sands  
 Of the gold-flowing Indian streams;—  
 oh! thou  
 Lord of the hundred thrones, high Nab-  
 onassar!  
 And thou my father, Merodach! ye  
 crown'd  
 This City with her diadem of towers—  
 Wherefore?—but prescient of Belshaz-  
 zar's birth,  
 And conscious of your destin'd son, ye  
 toil'd  
 To rear a meet abode. Oh, Babylon!  
 Thou hast him now, for whom through  
 ages rose  
 Thy sky-exalted towers—for whom yon  
 palace  
 Rear'd its bright domes, and groves of  
 golden spires;  
 In whom, secure of immortality  
 Thou stand'st, and consecrate from  
 time and ruin,  
 Because thou hast been the dwelling  
 of Belshazzar!

NITOCRIS.

I hear thy words: like thine, thy  
 mother's heart  
 Swells, oh, my son! to see thy seat of  
 empire.  
 But will the Lord of Babylon endure,

What in yon plain beneath offends our  
 sight,  
 The rebel Persian?

BELSHAZZAR.

Gave we not command,  
 To Tartan and to Artamas, to sweep  
 Yon tribes away, or ere our car ap-  
 proach'd  
 The northern wall?

ARIOCH.

They hasted forth, oh, King!  
 But Tartan came not back, nor Arta-  
 mas.

BELSHAZZAR.

Slaves! did they dare fall off from their  
 allegiance?

ARIOCH.

To the dominion they fell off of him  
 That hath the empire o'er departed  
 souls.

NITOCRIS.

Look down! look down! where, proud  
 of his light conquest,  
 The Persian rides—it is the youthful  
 Cyrus;  
 How skillfully he winds through all the  
 ranks  
 His steed, in graceful ease, as though  
 he sate  
 Upon a firm-set throne, yet every mo-  
 tion  
 Obedient to his slack and gentle rein,  
 As though one will controll'd the steed  
 and rider;  
 Now leaps he down, and holds a brief  
 discourse  
 With yon helm'd captain; like a stoop-  
 ing falcon,  
 Now vaults he to the patient courser's  
 back.  
 Happy the mother of that noble youth!

BELSHAZZAR.

Now, by great Bel! thou dost abuse our  
 patience.  
 Is that the rebel king to whom Bel-  
 shazzar

Should vail his pride, and stoop to be  
his foe;  
Him with the brazen arms, that, dimly  
bright,  
Scarce boast distinction from the  
meaner host?  
Where are his golden attributes of  
power,  
The glorious ensigns of his sovereignty;  
The jewel'd diadem, the ivory sceptre,  
The satrap circled throne, the kneeling  
hosts?—

NITOCRIS.

Dost ask, my son, his marks of sov-  
ereignty?  
The armies that behold his sign, and  
trust  
Their fate upon the wisdom of his rule,  
Confident of accustom'd victory;  
The unconquerable valour, the proud  
love  
Of danger, and the scorn of silken ease;  
The partnership in suffering and in  
want,  
Even with his meanest follower; the  
disdain  
Of wealth, that wins the spoil but to  
bestow it.  
Content with the renown of conquering  
deeds.

BELSHAZZAR.

By all our Gods!—

SABARIS.

Great Queen! it ill beseems  
The lowest of Chaldea's slaves to op-  
pose  
The mother of our king with insolent  
speech;  
But my bold zeal for him that rules  
the world  
Has made me dauntless. Is it not  
heaven's will,  
Written in the eternal course of human  
things,  
Some kings are born to toil, and some  
to enjoy;  
Some to build up the palace domes of  
power,  
That in their glowing shade their sons  
may sit  
Transcendent in luxurious ease, as they

In conquest? 'Tis the privilege of the  
chosen,  
The mark'd of fate, and favourites of  
the Gods,  
To find submissive earth deck'd out, a  
fair  
And summer garden house, for one  
long age  
Of toilless pleasure, and luxurious revel.

BELSHAZZAR.

The slave speaks well: and thee, oh,  
queen Nitocris!  
This eve will we compel, with gracious  
violence,  
To own our loftier fate. This sacred  
eve  
We'll have an army wide as yon that  
spreads  
Its tents on the hot sands; and they  
shall feast  
Around me, all reclin'd on ivory  
couches,  
Strew'd with Sidonian purple, and soft  
webs  
Of Egypt; fann'd by bright and glitter-  
ing plumes  
Held in the snowy hand of virgin  
slaves;  
And o'er their turban'd heads shall  
lightly wave  
The silken canopies, that softly tremble  
To gales of liquid odour; all the courts  
Shall breathe like groves of cassia and  
of nard.  
And every paradise of golden fruits,  
The forests and the tributary streams,  
In this one banquet shall exhaust their  
stores  
Of delicacies; the swans and Phasian  
birds,  
And roes and deer from off a thousand  
hills,  
Serv'd in the spices of the farthest  
East.  
And we will feast to dulcimers and  
lutes,  
And harps and cymbals, and all instru-  
ments  
Of rapturous sound, till it shall seem  
the stars  
Have stoop'd the nearer to our earth,  
to crown  
Our banquet with their heavenly con-  
cert. There,

Our captains and our counsellors, our  
wives

And bright-ey'd concubines, through all  
the palace

Th' array of splendour shall prolong—  
while I,

In state supreme, and glory that shall  
shame

The setting sun amid his purple clouds,  
Will on my massy couch of gold re-  
cline:

Then shalt thou come, and seeing thy  
son the orb

And centre of this radiance, even thy-  
self

Shalt wonder at thy impious speech,  
that dared

To equal aught on earth to great Bel-  
shazzar.

And now, lead on!—

THE ABOVE, BENINA, IMLAH, ADONIJAH,  
PRIESTS.

BENINA.

Ah, save me! save me!

ARIOCH.

Peace!

Before the king!—

BELSHAZZAR.

What frantic maid is this,  
That shrieks and flies, with loose and  
rending garments,  
And streaming hair?—And who are  
these that circle her,  
And sing around her?

SABARIS.

Live oh king, for ever!  
Chaldea's priests, that seek this even-  
ing's bride  
For mightiest Bel.

PRIESTS.

Beauteous damsel! chosen to meet  
First our wandering heaven-led feet.  
Spotless virgin! thee alone  
The great God of Babylon,  
From his starry seat above,  
Hath beheld with looks of love.  
Bride of him that rules the sky!

Cast not down thy weeping eye.  
Daughter of the captive race!  
For thine high and blissful place,  
In the heaven-hung chamber laid,  
Many a Babylonian maid  
To the voiceless midnight air,  
Murmurs low her bashful prayer.  
With enamour'd homage see,  
Round and round we circle thee;  
Round and round each dancing foot  
Glitters to the breathing lute.

SABARIS.

Why dost thou struggle thus, fond  
slave?

BENINA.

My father!—  
My dearest Adonijah! speak to him—  
The panting breath swells in my throat,  
my words  
Can find no utterance, save to thee.

IMLAH.

Great king!  
They rend away my child, mine only  
child!—

BELSHAZZAR.

Peace! she is borne to serve the God  
of Babylon:  
And ye should fall, and kiss their gar-  
ment hems,  
And bless them for the glory that  
awaits  
The captive maiden—

ADONIJAH.

Glory! call ye it,  
To be the lustful prey—

BENINA.

Sweet youth! no more.  
Oh, speak not!—by the love thou bear-  
est me—  
By all our hopes—alas! what hopes  
have we?—  
Let me endure no sufferings but my  
own.

BELSHAZZAR.

Priests, to your office!—

BENINA.

Oh! no mercy—none—  
Not even in thee, that wear'st a wom-  
an's form,

But all the cold, relentless pride of  
man—  
Mightiest of queens!—would I might  
add most gracious—

IMLAH.

God of our fathers! that alone canst  
save,  
Look down upon this guileless innocent.  
Lo! pale and fainting, like a wounded  
fawn  
She hangs upon their arms—death  
scarce could throw  
A sadder paleness, or more icy torpor,  
Over that form, whose loveliness is now  
Its bane, and stamps it for the worst  
of misery.

ADONIJAH.

Oh, for a Median scimitar!

ARIOCH.

What said he?

BENINA.

Nought—nought—

ARIOCH.

The slave forgets that scourges hang  
Upon our walls—

IMLAH.

And we had fondly thought  
The bitter dregs of our captivity  
Drank out! Farewell, my child! thou  
dost not hear me—  
Thou liest in cold and enviable sense-  
lessness,  
And we might almost fear, or hope,  
that death—  
Compassionate death—had freed thee  
from their violence.  
What now, my child?

ADONIJAH.

Oh, beautiful Benina!  
Why do thy timorous dove-like eyes  
awake,  
And glow with scorn? why dost thou  
shake away

The swoon of bashful fear, and stand  
erect,  
Thou, that didst hang, but now, like a  
loose woodbine,  
Trailing its beauteous clusters in the  
dust?

BENINA.

Give place, and let me speak unto my  
father,  
And to this youth—  
Fierce men! your care is vain—  
I will not stoop to fly.

IMLAH.

My soul is lost  
In wonder; yet I touch thee once again,  
And that is rapture.

BENINA.

Did ye not behold him  
Upon the terrace top,—the Man of  
God!  
The anointed Prophet!

IMLAH.

Daniel!

BENINA.

He whose lips  
Burn with the fire from heaven! I saw  
him, father:  
Alone he stood, and in his proud com-  
passion  
Look'd down upon this pomp that blaz'd  
beneath him,  
As one that sees a stately funeral.

IMLAH.

He spoke not?—

BENINA.

No:—like words articulate,  
His looks address'd my soul, and said—  
oh, maid,  
Be of good cheer—and, like a robe of  
light,  
A rapture fell upon me, and I caught  
Contagious scorn of earthly power; and  
fear



And bashful shame are gone, and in the  
might  
Of God, of Abraham's God, our father's  
God,  
I stand, superior to the insulting  
heathen.

BELSHAZZAR.

What! wait ye still to lead the Gods  
their slave,  
And thus delay Belshazzar's course?

BENINA.

Your Gods!

Whom I disdain to honour with my  
dread.

BELSHAZZAR.

Off with her! and advance our royal  
car:—  
Set forward.—

*[Belshazzar departs with his train.]*

BENINA.

Ye shall need no force to drag me.  
My father!—Adonijah!—gaze not thus,  
Blaspheming, with your timorous  
doubts, the arm  
Of the Most High, that waves above  
mine head  
In silent might unseen!—

And thou—go on,  
Go on thy stately course—Imperial Lord  
Of golden Babylon! the scourge that  
lash'd

The Nations, from whose mantling cup  
of pride

Earth drank, and with the fierce intoxica-  
tion

Scoff'd at the enduring heavens.

Go on, in awe  
And splendour, radiant as the morning  
star,

But as the morning star to be cast  
down

Into the deep of deeps. Long, long the  
Lord

Hath bade his Prophets cry to all the  
world,

That Babylon shall cease! Their words  
of fire

Flash round my soul, and lighten up the  
depths

Of dim futurity! I hear the voice

Of the expecting grave!—I hear abroad  
The exultation of unfetter'd earth!—  
From East to West they lift their tram-  
pled necks,

Th' indignant nations: earth breaks out  
in scorn;

The valleys dance and sing; the moun-  
tains shake

Their cedar-crown'd tops! The stran-  
gers crowd

To gaze upon the howling wilderness,  
Where stood the Queen of Nations. Lo!

even now,

Lazy Euphrates rolls his sullen waves  
Through wastes, and but reflects his

own thick reeds.

I hear the bitterns shriek, the dragons  
cry;

I see the shadow of the midnight owl  
Gliding where now are laughter-echoing  
palaces!

O'er the vast plain I see the mighty  
tombs

Of kings, in sad and broken whiteness  
gleam

Beneath the o'ergrown cypress—but no  
tomb

Bears record, Babylon, of thy last lord;  
Even monuments are silent of Belshaz-  
zar!

PRIEST.

Still must we hear it?—

BENINA.

Yea, ye must!—the words  
Of God will find a voice in every wind;  
The stones will speak, the marble walls  
cry out!

PRIEST.

Maid, in Bel's appointed bride

We must brook the words of pride;

Mortal voice may ne'er reprove

Whom the bright immortals love;

Nor hand of mortal violate

Her, the chosen immortal's mate.

BENINA.

Oh, Adonijah! soothe my mother's  
tears;

Be to my father what I should have  
been;



And now farewell! Forget not her  
 whose thoughts,  
 In terror and in rapture, still will dwell  
 On thee: in prayer, at morn and eve,  
 forget not  
 Her who will need prayers worthier  
 than her own.

## BEFORE THE HOUSE OF IMLAH.

IMLAH, ADONIJAH.

IMLAH.

We are here at length:—we two have  
 glided on  
 Like voiceless ghosts, along the crowd-  
 ed streets.  
 The miserable pour their tale of an-  
 guish  
 Into the happy ear, and feel sweet so-  
 lace  
 From his compassion; but the wretched  
 find  
 No comfort from imparting mutual bit-  
 terness.  
 I know I ought to feel that God pro-  
 tects  
 My child—I can but think that heathen  
 arms  
 Have torn her from my bleeding heart!  
 I know  
 I ought to kindle with the heavenly fire  
 Of her rapt spirit, to dauntlessness like  
 hers.  
 I can but tremble for her tender loveli-  
 ness,  
 That us'd to cling to me for its sup-  
 port,  
 Like a soft lily, for the world's rude  
 airs  
 Too frail.

ADONIJAH.

Scarce dare I speak, lest I speak rashly.  
 I have rebuked and struggled with my  
 sorrow,  
 Till I detected in my secret heart  
 A proud reproach, that I was born a  
 son  
 Of Abraham, to be trampled in the dust  
 Like a base worm, that dare not turn  
 to sting  
 The insulting foot.

IMLAH.

Oh cool decline of day,  
 That wert the captive's hour of joy, his  
 tasks  
 Fulfill'd, his master's wayward pride  
 worn out,  
 How wert thou wont to lead my weary  
 foot  
 To such a blissful home,—I've oft for-  
 got  
 It was a captive's. Naomi, my wife,  
 I never fear'd to meet thy loving looks  
 Till now.

THE ABOVE, NAOMI.

So, Imlah, thou'rt return'd:—and thou,  
 My son, I'll call thee.—Sweet it is t'  
 anticipate,  
 And make the fond tongue thus familiar  
 With words that it so oft must use.  
 Stay, stay,  
 Beloved! and I'll call forth, or ere ye  
 enter,  
 My child, whose welcome will be  
 sweeter to you  
 Than the cold babbling of her aged  
 mother:—  
 I had forgot—she went abroad with  
 you.

IMLAH.

Have mercy, Heaven!

NAOMI.

Now, whither is she gone?  
 To seek for thee the cup of sparkling  
 water  
 With which she used to lave thy burn-  
 ing brow;  
 Or gather thee the rosy fruit, that  
 gain'd  
 Fresh sweetness to thy taste, from that  
 dear hand  
 That offer'd it. She ever thought—  
 though weary  
 Herself and wanting food—of minis-  
 tering  
 First to the ease and joy of those she  
 lov'd.—  
 Ha! tears upon thy brow, thy noble  
 brow,  
 Which I have seen endure—

IMLAH.

Go in!—no, stay  
Without! I cannot venture where some  
mark  
Of her fond duty and officious care,  
Will be the first thing mine eyes see.—  
My wife,  
Why dost thou tear thine hair, and  
clasp thy brain?  
I have not told thee—

NAOMI.

What has thou to tell me?  
Thou'rt here without her:—thou and  
this brave youth  
Have eyes that burst with tears. She's  
lost!—she's dead!

IMLAH.

Would that she were!

NAOMI.

Unnatural father! wretch,  
That hast no touch of human pity in  
thee,  
To tell a mother thou canst wish her  
child  
Where her fond arms can never fold  
her more!—  
Oh, Imlah! Imlah! tell me—tell me all—  
Ye cannot tell me more than what I  
fear.

IMLAH.

They tore her from us, for a paramour  
For their false Gods—

NAOMI.

'Tis ever thus:—most bless'd  
But to be made most wretched!

IMLAH.

Pardon her,  
Oh Lord! oh, we can chide on others'  
lips,  
What our own burn to utter!

NAOMI.

All my care,  
My jealous, vigilant, and restless care,

To veil her from the eyes of man, to  
keep her  
Like a sweet violet, that the airs of  
heaven  
Scarcely detect in its secluded shade,  
All waste and vain! I was so proud,  
to think  
I had conceal'd our treasure from the  
knowledge  
Of our rude masters—and I thought  
how envied  
I should return among our barren  
mothers,  
To Salem.

IMLAH.

Dearest! she beheld—she felt  
The arm of Israel's God protecting her.  
Thou canst not think with what a beau-  
teous scorn  
Our soft and timorous child o'erawed  
the spoiler—  
How nobly she reproved our fears.

NAOMI.

Poor fool!  
To be deluded by those tender arts  
She ever used—her only arts—to spare  
Our bleeding hearts from knowing  
when she suffer'd.  
What! she look'd fearless, did she? She  
in the arms  
Of sinful men, that trembled at heaven's  
airs,  
When they came breathing o'er her  
blushing cheek.  
And ye—thou, Adonijah, that dost know  
Her timorous nature, wert deceiv'd?—  
cold comfort!  
Have ye no better?

IMLAH.

Oh, weep! weep, my wife!  
Look not upon me with those stony  
eyes!  
Oh, think—the cup is bitter, but the  
Lord  
May change it:—think of him that lost  
so many,  
His sons and daughters, at their jocund  
feast,  
All at one blow—and said\*—God gave,  
and God  
Hath taken away.

\*Job i: 21.

## NAOMI.

Had he but one, like ours;  
One that engross'd his undivided love;  
One such as ne'er before blest human  
heart,  
Would he have said so?

Wilt not tell me, too,  
How Sarah in her old age bore a child,  
To be a joy within her desolate house?  
Go on—go on—recount each act of love,  
Each merciful miracle, that we may  
know  
How gracious God hath been to all—  
but us.

## IMLAH.

Hear her not, God of Israel!—oh, my  
son!  
We must distract this phrensy, or 'twill  
blight  
Heaven's hop'd for blessings to a bar-  
ren curse,  
And intercept some soft descending  
mercy.  
What shall we do?—what say?—to dis-  
sipate  
Her brooding thoughts? We'll take the  
harps that hang  
Around us, and are us'd to feel the  
hand  
Of sorrow trembling on their mournful  
strings.  
When ye demand sweet Sion's songs to  
mock them,  
Proud strangers, our right hands forget  
their cunning.  
But ye revenge you, wringing from our  
hearts  
Sounds that might melt your senseless  
stones to pity.

## HYMN.

Oh, thou that wilt not break the bruised  
reed,  
Nor heap fresh ashes on the mourn-  
er's brow,  
Nor rend anew the wounds that inly  
bleed,  
The only balm of our afflictions thou,  
Teach us to bear thy chastening wrath,  
oh God!  
To kiss with quivering lips—still humbly  
kiss thy rod!

We bless thee, Lord, though far from  
Judah's land;  
Though our worn limbs are black  
with stripes and chains;  
Though for stern foes we till the burn-  
ing sand;  
And reap, for others' joy, the summer  
plains;  
We bless thee, Lord, for thou art gra-  
cious still,  
Even though this last black drop o'er-  
flow our cup of ill!

We bless thee for our lost, our beaute-  
ous child;  
The tears, less bitter, she hath made  
us weep;  
The weary hours her graceful sports  
have 'guiled,  
And the dull cares her voice hath  
sung to sleep!  
She was the dove of hope to our lorn  
ark;  
The only star that made the strangers'  
sky less dark!

Our dove is fall'n into the spoiler's net;  
Rude hands defile her plumes, so  
chastely white;  
To the bereaved their one soft star is  
set,  
And all above is sullen, cheerless  
night!  
But still we thank thee for our transient  
bliss—  
Yet, Lord, to scourge our sins re-  
main'd no way but this?

As when our Father to Mount Moriah  
led  
The blessing's heir, his age's hope and  
joy,  
Pleased, as he roam'd along with danc-  
ing tread,  
Chid his slow sire, the fond, officious  
boy,  
And laugh'd in sport to see the yellow  
fire  
Climb up the turf-built shrine, his des-  
tined funeral pyre—

Even thus our joyous child went lightly  
on;  
Bashfully sportive, timorously gay,  
Her white foot bounded from the  
pavement stone

Like some light bird from off the quiv-  
 'ring spray;  
 And back she glanced, and smiled, in  
 blameless glee,  
 The cars, and helms, and spears, and  
 mystic dance to see.

By thee, Oh Lord, the gracious voice  
 was sent  
 That bade the Sire his murtherous  
 task forego:

When to his home the child of Abra-  
 ham went

His mother's tears had scarce begun  
 to flow.

Alas! and lurks there, in the thicket's  
 shade,

The victim to replace our lost, devoted  
 maid?

Lord, even through thee to hope were  
 now too bold;

Yet 'twere to doubt thy mercy to  
 despair.

'Tis anguish, yet 'tis comfort, faint  
 and cold,

To think how sad we are, how blest  
 we were!

To speak of her is wretchedness, and  
 yet

It were a grief more deep and bitterer  
 to forget!

Oh Lord our God! why was she e'er  
 our own?

Why is she not our own—our treas-  
 ure still?

We could have pass'd our heavy years  
 alone.

Alas! is this to bow us to thy will?

Ah, even our humblest prayers we make  
 repine,

Nor, prostrate thus on earth, our hearts  
 to thee resign.

Forgive, forgive—even should our full  
 hearts break:

The broken heart thou wilt not, Lord,  
 despise:

Ah! thou art still too gracious to for-  
 sake,

Though thy strong hand so heavily  
 chastise.

Hear all our prayers, hear not our mur-  
 murs, Lord;

And, though our lips rebel, still make  
 thyself ador'd.

## THE FRONT OF THE TEMPLE.

### PRIESTS WITHIN.

Hark! what dancing footsteps fall  
 Light before the Temple wall?  
 Who are ye that seek to pass  
 Through the burnish'd gate of brass?  
 Come ye with the gifts of Kings,  
 With the peacock's bright-eyed wings?  
 With the myrrh and fragrant spice?  
 With the spotless sacrifice?  
 With the spoils of conquer'd lands?  
 With the works of maidens' hands,  
 O'er the glittering loom that run,  
 Underneath the orient sun?  
 Bring ye pearl, or choicest gem,  
 From a plunder'd diadem?  
 Ivory wand, or ebony  
 From the sable Indian tree?  
 Purple from the Tyrian shore;  
 Amber cup, or coral store,  
 From the branching trees that grow  
 Under the salt sea-water's flow?

### PRIESTS, WITH BENINA.

With a fairer gift we come  
 To the God's majestic home  
 Than the pearls the rich shells weep  
 In the Erythrean deep.  
 All our store of ebony  
 Sparkles in her radiant eye.  
 Whiter far her spotless skin  
 Than the gauzy vestures thin,  
 Bleach'd upon the shores of Nile;  
 Grows around no palmy isle  
 Coral like her swelling lips,  
 Whence the gale its sweetness sips,  
 That upon the spice-tree blown  
 Seems a fragrance all its own;  
 Never yet so fair a maid  
 On the bridal couch was laid;  
 Never form beseem'd so well  
 The immortal arms of Bel.

### PRIESTS [*leading her in*].

Mid the dashing fountains cool,  
 In the marble vestibule,  
 Where the orange branches play,  
 Freshen'd by the silver spray,

Heaven-led virgin, take thy rest,  
While we bear the silken vest.  
And the purple robe of pride  
Meet for Bel's expected bride.

## ALL THE PRIESTS.

Bridelike now she stands array'd!  
Welcome, welcome, dark-hair'd maid!  
Lead her in, with dancing feet,  
Lead her in, with music sweet.  
With the cymbals glancing round,  
And the hautboy's silver sound.  
See the golden gates expand,  
And the Priests, on either hand,  
On their faces prone they fall  
Entering the refulgent Hall.  
With the tread that suits thy state,  
Glowing cheek, and look elate,  
With thine high unbending brow,  
Sacred maiden, enter thou.

## FIRST PRIEST.

Chosen of Bel, thou stands't within the  
Temple,  
Within the first and lowest of our Halls,  
Yet not least sumptuous. On the jas-  
per pavement,  
Each in his deep alcove, Chaldea's  
Kings  
Stand on their carved pedestals. Be-  
hold them!  
Their marble brows still wear the con-  
scious awe  
Of sovereignty—the mightiest of the  
dead,  
As of the living. Eminent, in the centre,  
The golden statue stands of Nabonassar,  
That in the plain of Dura, to the sound  
Of harp, and lute, and dulcimer, re-  
ceived  
The homage of the world. The Scythi-  
an hills,  
The margin of the Syrian sea, the Isles  
Of Ocean, their adoring tribes cast  
down;  
And the high sun, at noonday, saw no  
face  
Of all mankind turn'd upward from the  
dust,  
Save the imperial brow of Nabonassar.  
That rose in lonely loftiness, as now  
Yon awe-crown'd image.

## BENINA.

Have ye wrought him, too,  
As when he prowld the plain, th' asso-  
ciate  
Of the brute herd that browsed around,  
nor own'd  
The dread of a superior presence, beat  
By the uncourtly rains and wintry  
winds  
Upon the undiadem'd head?

## PRIEST.

Cease, cease, nor tempt  
The loving patience of the God too far!  
Advance! and wind along the aspiring  
stair.

## PRIESTS.

Haste! the fading light of day  
Scarce will gild our lofty way.  
Haste, nor tremble, tender maid!  
To the sculptur'd balustrade  
Cling not thus with snowy hand;  
None but slaves around thee stand,  
On thy footsteps proud to wait:  
Hark! the slow-recoiling gate  
Opens at our trumpet's call;  
Enter, now, our second Hall.

## SECOND PRIEST.

Well mayst thou hold thine alabaster  
hand,  
Through which the rosy light so softly  
shines,  
Before thine eyes, oh! maiden, as thou  
enterest  
The Chamber of the Tribute. Here  
thou seest  
The wealth of all the subject world,  
piled up  
In order—from its multitude that seems  
Confusion: in each deep, receding vault,  
O'er all the spacious pavement, 'tis the  
same;  
The flaming gold, and ivory, and the  
gems—  
If all mankind were Kings, enough to  
crown  
Each brow with an imperial diadem!



BENINA.

Oh! rapt Isaiah, were they not thy words—  
How hath she ceased—the golden city  
ceased!  
Will all that wealth but ransom thee an  
hour,  
Or bribe the impartial and undazzled  
Ruin  
One instant to suspend its swooping  
wing?

PRIESTS.

Breathe again the clear blue air;  
Mount again the marble stair:  
Still we mount—on high—on high,  
To the exulting harmony!  
Hark! the strain of triumph rings  
In the Hall of Captive Kings.

THIRD PRIEST.

Now pause again: yon chained images  
Are those that ruled the world, or ere  
the Lord  
Of great Chaldea took the all-ruling  
sceptre  
Into his iron hand, and laid the pride  
Of all the kingdoms prostrate at his  
feet.

BENINA.

Oh! King of Judah, thou art there! Thy  
foes,  
In charitable cruelty, did quench  
Thy sightless eyes, lest thou should'st  
see the dwelling  
Which thou had'st chang'd for Sion's  
beauteous hill;  
Lest thou should'st more than hear thy  
sorrowing people  
Doom'd by thy sins, and by their own,  
to bondage.  
Thou, Zedekiah, did'st desert thy God,  
And wert of God deserted;—nor to  
thee  
Is given, withdrawn into a foreign  
grave,  
To feel again soft Canaan's fragrant  
gales  
On thy blind brow, almost persuading  
thee  
That, in thy darkness, thou canst still  
behold

Some once-lov'd spot, or dim-remem-  
ber'd scene.

The glad deliverance that comes to  
Judah

Comes not to thee. Alas! to sad Be-  
nina,

Oh, gracious God of Abraham, will it  
come?

PRIESTS.

Maid, again we lift the song;  
Thy soft feet have rested long;  
Nearer, nearer as we climb  
To the highest Hall sublime,  
Bride of the Immortal, thee  
All the city throngs to see,  
Floating, like a snowy dove,  
In the azure clouds above.  
Lo! the fourth of our abodes,  
Chamber of the captive Gods!

BENINA.

Oh, Lord of Hosts! I dare not gaze  
around me,

Lest in yon heaps of monstrous forms  
uncouth

The scaly Dagon, and the brute Osiris,  
Moon-crown'd Astarte, or the Sun-like

Mithra,

Some shape I should behold by the blind  
Gentile

Held worthy to enclose th' Illimitable  
That fills the Heaven and Earth. The  
Cherubim,

Perchance, are here, behind whose  
golden wings

Thy fiery presence dwelt, but dwells no  
more.

I know that danger waits me on yon  
height,

But thither haste I rather than behold  
Profaning Heathens scorn what thou  
hast glorified.

Lead on—

PRIESTS.

Half thy journey now is past;  
Who shall wonder at thine haste:—  
Dost not wish for wings to fly  
To thy blissful destiny?  
Yet, oh tread with footstep light  
As the falling dews of night;  
Like the gliding serpent creep  
Where the gifted Dreamers sleep;



Fold thou close thy fluttering dress,  
Even thy panting breath suppress,  
Lest some glorious dream we break:—  
Lo! 'tis vain—they move—they wake!

## THE DREAMERS.

Hark! hark! the foot—we hear the  
trembling foot,  
With motion like the dying wind upon  
a silver lute:  
Upon our sleep it came, as soft itself  
as sleep;  
It shone upon our visions like a star  
upon the deep.

Lo! lo! the form, the graceful form we  
see  
That seem'd, through all the live-long  
night, before our eyes to be:  
Above, the eyes of sparkling jet, the  
brow like marble fair;  
And down, and o'er the snowy breast,  
the dark and wandering hair.

Hark! hark! the song—we hear the  
bridal song—  
Amid the listening stars it flows the  
sounding heavens along!  
It follows the Immortal down from his  
empyrean sky.  
Descending to his mortal bride in full  
divinity!

## BENINA.

What! are your dreams so soft; and  
saw ye nought  
Of midnight flames, that clomb the pal-  
ace walls,  
And ran along the terrace colonnades,  
And pour'd the liquid walls in torrent  
flames  
Of dark asphaltus?—Heard ye not the  
wail  
Of wounded men, and shrieks of flying  
women;  
And the carv'd Gods dash'd down in  
cumbrous ruin  
On their own shrines?

## PRIESTS.

Great Bel avert the omen!

## PRIESTS.

Hurry on, nor more delay;  
Shadows darken on our way;  
Only in the hall we tread;  
Ask of those the stars that read,  
Catching every influence  
Their all-ruling orbs dispense.  
From those silent Prophets bright  
That adorn the vault of night,  
Watchers of the starry sky,  
Know ye, feel ye, who is nigh?

## ASTROLOGERS.

What planet rolls its pearly car,  
What orb of mild or angry hue?  
The star of love, the silver star,  
Glides lonely through yon depth of  
blue.  
We see her sailing motion calm;  
We hear the music of her sound;  
We drink Mylitta's breathing balm,  
In odorous clouds distill'd around.  
And calm, and musical, and sweet  
Is she that star's mild influence leads—  
The maid that, with her snowy feet,  
Even now the sacred pavement treads.

## BENINA.

Enough of this! Oh! chaste and quiet  
stars,  
And pure, as all things from infecting  
Earth  
Remov'd, and near the throne of God;  
whose calm  
And beautiful obedience to the laws  
Of your great Maker is a mute re-  
proach  
To the unruly courses of the world,  
Would they debase you to the minis-  
ters  
And guilty favourers of their sinful  
purpose?

## PRIESTS.

Now our toil is all but done;  
Now the height is all but won;  
By the High Priest's lonely seat,  
By Kalassan's still retreat,  
Where, in many a brazen fold,  
The slumbering Dragon lies outroll'd,  
Pass we on, nor pause. Nor thou

Gaze, oh Priest, with wondering brow!  
 Lovelier though her cheek appears  
 For her toil and for her tears;  
 And the bosom's vest beneath  
 Heaves the quick and panting breath.

KALASSAN.

More beautiful ne'er trod our marble  
 stairs!

PRIESTS.

None!—but still the maid dismiss  
 To her place of destined bliss:—  
 That no mortal eye may see—  
 On! we may not follow thee:  
 Only with our music sweet  
 We pursue thy mounting feet.  
 Now, upon the topmost height,  
 Thou art lost to mortal sight!  
 Lo! the couch beside thee spread,  
 Where the Heaven-loved maids are wed.  
 Till the bridal midnight deep  
 Bow thy head in balmy sleep—  
 Sleep that shall be sweetly broken  
 When the God his bride hath woken.

BENINA.

Alone! alone upon this giddy height!  
 Yet, better thus than by that frantic  
 rout  
 Encircled: yet a while, and I shall  
 breathe  
 With freedom. Oh! thou cool, delicious  
 silence,  
 How grateful art thou to the ears that  
 ring  
 With that wild music's turbulent dis-  
 sonance!

By slow degrees the starlight face of  
 things  
 Grows clear around my misty, swim-  
 ming eyes.  
 Oh, Babylon! how art thou spread be-  
 neath me!  
 Like some wide plain, with rich pa-  
 vilions set  
 Mid the dark umbrage of a summer  
 grave,  
 Like a small rivulet, that from bank to  
 bank  
 Is ruffled by the sailing cygnet's breast,  
 Euphrates seems to wind. Oh! thou  
 vast city,

Thus dwindled to our human sight,  
 what art thou  
 To Him that from his throne, above  
 the skies,  
 Beyond the circuit of the golden Sun,  
 Views all the subject world!

The parting day

To twilight and the few faint early  
 stars  
 Hath left the city. On yon western  
 lake

A momentary gleam is lingering still.  
 Thou'rt purpling now, oh Sun, the vines  
 of Canaan,

And crowning, with rich light, the cedar  
 top

Of Lebanon, where—but oh! without  
 their daughter—

Soon my sad parents shall return.  
 Where are ye,

Beloved? I seek in vain the lonely light  
 Of our dear cabin on Euphrates' side,  
 Amid yon kindling fires. And have ye  
 quench'd it,

That all your dwelling be as darkly sad  
 As are your childless hearts?—And  
 thou—mine own,

I thought this morn, and called thee—  
 Adonijah,

Art thou, too, thinking of that hour like  
 this;

The balmy, tranquil, and scarce star-  
 light hour,

When the soft Moon had sent her  
 harbinger,

Pale Silence, to foreshow her coming  
 presence;

To hush the winds, and smooth the  
 clouds before her?

That hour, that, with delicious treach-  
 ery, stole

The secret from Benina's lips she  
 long'd,

From her full heart, t' unburthen?  
 Better, now,

Had it been buried in eternal darkness,  
 Than thus have kindled hopes that  
 shone so softly—

Were quench'd so soon, so utterly.—

Fond heart,

These soft, desponding, yet delightful  
 thoughts,

Must not dissolve thee to mistrust in  
 him

That fill'd thee as with fire, and  
 touch'd my lips  
 With holy scorn of all the wealth and  
 pride  
 That blazed around my path. Even now  
 I feel  
 My trembling foot more firm; and, like  
 the eagle's,  
 Mine eyes familiar with their cloudy  
 height—  
 What's here?—an hurried tread—  
 What art thou? speak!

KALASSAN.

The honour'd of the God that honours  
 thee.  
 Oh, miracle of beauty! I beheld thee,  
 And strove with my impatient spirit  
 within  
 To wait th' appointed hour;—but, as  
 the pilgrim  
 Sees the white fountain in the palmy  
 shade,  
 Nor brooks delay, even thus my thirsty  
 eyes  
 Demand their instant feast.

BENINA.

Thou should'st have brought  
 The sage Diviners to unfold the mean-  
 ing  
 Of this dark language.

KALASSAN.

Loveliest bashfulness!  
 Or is it but the sportive ignorance  
 That laughs beneath the dark and glit-  
 tering eyelids,  
 At the delighted dupe of its dis-  
 sembling?

BENINA.

Peace, and avaunt!

KALASSAN.

Oh maid! that art so beauteous  
 That yon bright Moon is rising, all in  
 haste,  
 To gaze on thee, or to display thy  
 grace

To him, that, lost in wonder, scarce hath  
 melted  
 To love.

The snowy light falls where she  
 treads,  
 As 'twere a sacred place! in her loose  
 locks  
 It wanders, even as with a sense of  
 pleasure!  
 And trembles on her bosom, that hath  
 caught  
 Its gentle restlessness, and trembles,  
 too,  
 Harmonious.

BENINA.

Must mine ears endure thee still?

KALASSAN.

And know'st thou not why thou art  
 here; what bliss,  
 What bridal rapture waits thee?

BENINA.

There are sins  
 Whose very dread infects the virgin's  
 soul,  
 Tainting the fountain of her secret  
 thoughts;  
 I'm here to suffer evil—what, I know  
 not,  
 But will remain in holy ignorance,  
 Till my dark hour of trial.

KALASSAN.

Hast thou never,  
 Soft maid, when fervid moon bathes all  
 the world  
 In silence, in thy fond and wandering  
 thoughts,  
 Beheld a noble bridegroom seated near  
 thee,  
 And heard him, 'mid sweet falls of  
 marriage-music,  
 Whispering what made thy pale cheek  
 burn?

BENINA.

Away!—  
 And must he see my tears? and think  
 me weak,  
 And of my God abandon'd?

KALASSAN.

Lo! the couch  
 Bestrewn with flowers, whose fragrance  
 and whose hues  
 Shall not have faded, till great Bel come  
 down  
 Beneath that dimly canopied alcove—

BENINA.

There 's that within thy words I ought  
 to fear:  
 But it should seem, that with the earth  
 I've left  
 All earthly fears beneath me. I defy  
 Thee and thy Gods alike.

KALASSAN.

Alike in truth;  
 For sometimes doth the Mightiest not  
 disdain  
 To veil his glories in a mortal shape,  
 Even great Kalassan's. Look on me,  
 and say  
 If he could choose a nobler.

BENINA.

What! and fear'st not  
 Thine own false Gods—thou worse than  
 Idol worshipper?  
 Why, even the senseless wood and stone  
 might wake  
 To indignation, and their fiery ven-  
 geance  
 Break forth from Heaven. Alas! and  
 what have they  
 Whose name thou dost usurp to cloke  
 thy sin,  
 To do with Heaven more than thy  
 loathsome self?

KALASSAN.

Thine eyes, albeit so full of scorn, sur-  
 vey not  
 My form in vain. I tell thee, Maid, I  
 tread  
 This earth so conscious that the best of  
 Deity,  
 The power and majesty reside within  
 me,  
 That I but stoop to win myself a bride  
 Beneath another name: here 'mid the  
 clouds

I stand, as in mine own appropriate  
 place.

BENINA.

The darkest pit of Tophet were too light  
 For thine offense.

KALASSAN.

Oh! soft and musical voice,  
 Art thou so lavish of injurious words?  
 Erewhile thou'lt be as prodigal of fond-  
 ness;  
 So now prepare thee: ere two hours are  
 past  
 Thou wedd'st Kalassan, or Kalassan's  
 God.  
 Or both, or either, which thou wilt.  
 Farewell  
 A little while: but I beseech thee, wear  
 When I return, this soft, becoming  
 pride;  
 Nor imitate, as yet, the amorous slaves  
 That weary with officious tenderness.  
 Be as thou seem'st, a kindred spirit with  
 mine,  
 And we will mate like eagles in the  
 Heavens,  
 And give our children an immortal heri-  
 tage  
 To bathe their plumage in the fiery sun.

BENINA (*alone*).

Did the earth bear thee, monster! or art  
 thou  
 Th' Eternal Enemy in the human shape?  
 Oh! 'tis the innocent's best security,  
 That the unrighteous pluck the thunder-  
 bolt  
 With such resistless violence on their  
 heads.  
 Lord of the insulted Heavens! thou  
 canst not strike  
 This impious man, without delivering  
 me;  
 Me, else unworthy of thy gracious  
 mercy.  
 But lo! what blaze of light beneath  
 me spreads  
 O'er the wide citv. Like von galaxy  
 Above mine head, each long and spa-  
 cious street  
 Becomes a line of silver light, the trees  
 In all their silent avenues break out

In flowers of fire. But chief around  
 the Palace  
 Whitens the glowing splendour; every  
 court  
 That lay in misty dimness indistinct,  
 Is traced by pillars and high architraves  
 Of crystal lamps that tremble in the  
 wind:  
 Each portal arch gleams like an earthly  
 rainbow,  
 And o'er the front spreads one entable-  
 ture  
 Of living gems of every hue, so bright  
 That the pale Moon, in virgin modesty,  
 Retreating from the dazzling and the  
 tumult,  
 Afar upon the distant plain reposes  
 Her unambitious beams, or on the bo-  
 som  
 Of the blue river, ere it reach the walls.  
 Hark! too, the sounds of revelry and  
 song  
 Upon the pinions of the breeze come up  
 Even to this height. No eye is closed  
 in sleep;  
 None in vast Babylon but wakes to  
 joy—  
 None—none is sad and desolate but I.  
 Yet over all, I know not whence or  
 how,  
 A dim oppression loads the air, and  
 sounds  
 As of vast wings do somewhere seem  
 to brood  
 And hover on the winds; and I that  
 most  
 Should tremble for myself, the appoint-  
 ed prey  
 Of sin, am bow'd, as with enforced  
 compassion,  
 To think on sorrows not mine own, to  
 weep  
 O'er those whose laughter and whose  
 song upbraids  
 My prodigality of mis-spent pity.  
 I will go rest, if rest it may be call'd—  
 Not, Adonijah—not to think of thee.  
 Oh! bear a brief, unwilling banishment  
 From thine own home, my heart; I can  
 not cope  
 With thy subduing image, and be strong.

CHORUS OF BABYLONIANS BEFORE THE  
 PALACE.

Awake! awake! put on thy garb of  
 pride,  
 Array thee like a sumptuous royal  
 bride,  
 O festal Babylon!  
 Lady, whose ivory throne  
 Is by the side of many azure waters!  
 In floating dance, like birds upon the  
 wing,  
 Send tinkling forth thy silver-sandal'd  
 daughters;  
 Send in the solemn march,  
 Beneath each portal arch,  
 Thy rich-robed lords to crowd the ban-  
 quet of their King.

They come! they come from both the  
 illumined shores;  
 Down each long street the festive  
 tumult pours;  
 Along the waters dark  
 Shoots many a gleaming bark,  
 Like stars along the midnight welkin  
 flashing,  
 And galleys, with their masts en-  
 wreath'd with light,  
 From their quick oars the kindling wa-  
 ters dashing;  
 In one long moving line  
 Along the bridge they shine  
 And with their glad disturbance wake  
 the peaceful night.

Hang forth, hang forth, in all your  
 avenues,  
 The arching lamps of more than rain-  
 bow hues,  
 Oh! gardens of delight!  
 With the cool airs of night  
 Are lightly waved your silver-foliaged  
 trees,  
 The deep-embower'd yet glowing blaze  
 prolong  
 Height above height the lofty terraces;  
 Seeing this new day-break,  
 The nestling birds awake,  
 The nightingale hath hush'd her sweet  
 untimely song.

Lift up, lift up your golden-valv'd  
 doors.  
 Spread to the glittering dance your  
 marble floors.



Palace! whose spacious halls,  
And far-receding walls,  
Are hung with purple like the morning  
skies;  
And all the living luxuries of sound  
Pour from the long out-stretching gal-  
leries;

Down every colonnade  
The sumptuous board is laid,  
With golden cups and lamps and bossy  
chargers crown'd.

They haste, they haste! the high-  
crown'd Rulers stand,  
Each with his sceptre in his kingly  
hand;

The bearded Elders sage,  
Though pale with thought and  
age;

Those through whose bounteous and  
unfailing hands  
The tributary streams of treasure flow  
From the rich bounds of earth's re-  
motest lands;

All but the pomp and pride  
Of battle laid aside,  
Chaldea's Captains stand in many a glit-  
tering row.

They glide, they glide! each, like an  
antelope,

Bounding in beauty on a sunny slope,  
With full and speaking eyes,  
And graceful necks that rise

O'er snowy bosoms in their emulous  
pride,

The chosen of earth's choicest loveli-  
ness;

Some with the veil thrown timidly  
aside,

Some boastful and elate  
In their majestic state

Whose bridal bed Belshazzar's self hath  
deign'd to bless.

Come forth! come forth! and crown  
the peerless feast,

Thou whose high birthright was the ef-  
fulgent east!

On th' ivory seat alone.

Monarch of Babylon!

Survey the interminable wilderness  
Of splendour, stretching far beyond the  
sight;

Nought but thy presence wants there  
now to bless:

The music waits for thee,  
Its fount of harmony,  
Transcending glory thou of this thrice  
glorious night!

Behold! behold! each gem-crown'd  
forehead proud

And every plume and crested helm is  
bow'd,

Each high-arch'd vault along  
Breaks out the blaze of song,  
Belshazzar comes! nor Bel, when he re-  
turns

From riding on his stormy thunder-  
cloud,

To where his bright celestial palace  
burns,

Alights with loftier tread,  
More full of stately dread,  
While under his fix'd feet the loaded  
skies are bow'd.

## THE HALL OF BANQUET.

### CHORUS.

Mightiest of the sons of man!  
The lion in his forest lair,  
The eagle in the fields of air,  
Amid the tumbling waves Leviathan,  
In power without or peer or mate,  
Hold their inviolable state:  
Alone Belshazzar stands on earth,  
Pre-eminent o'er all of human birth,  
Mightiest of the sons of man!

Richest of the sons of man!  
For thee the mountains teem with  
gold,  
The spicy groves their bloom un-  
fold,  
The bird of beauty bears its feathery  
fan,

And amber paves the yellow seas,  
And spread the branching coral  
trees,  
Nor shrouds the mine its deepest  
gem,

Ambitious to adorn Belshazzar's dia-  
dem,

Richest of the sons of man!

Fairest of the sons of man!  
Tall as the cedar towers thine head,



And fleet and terrible thy tread,  
 As the strong coursers in the battle's  
   van;  
 An Eden blooms upon thy face;  
 Like music, thy majestic grace  
 Holds the mute gazer's breath sup-  
   press'd,  
 And makes a tumult in the wondering  
   breast,  
 Fairest of the sons of man!

Noblest of the sons of man!  
 The first a kingly rule that won,  
 Wide as the journey of the sun,  
 From Nimrod thine high-sceptred race  
   began;  
 And gathering splendor still, went  
   down  
 From sire to son the eternal crown  
 Till full on great Belshazzar's crest  
 Its high meridian glory shone confest,—  
 Noblest of the sons of man!

Happiest of the sons of man!  
 In wine, in revel, and in joy  
 Was softly nursed the imperial boy;  
 His golden years like Indian rivers ran,  
 And every rapturous hour surpast  
 The glowing rapture of the last,  
 Even till the plenitude of bliss  
 Did overflow and centre all in this,  
 Happiest of the sons of man!

## SABARIS.

Peace! peace! the king vouchsafes his  
   gracious speech.  
 Sit ye like statues silent! ye have  
   quaff'd  
 The liquid gladness of the blood-red  
   wine,  
 And ye have eaten of the golden fruits  
 That the sun ripens but for kingly lips,  
 And now ye are about to feast your  
   ears  
 With great Belshazzar's voice.

## ARIOCH.

The crowded hall  
 Suspense, and prescient of the coming  
   joy,  
 Is silent as the cloudless summer skies.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Oh ye, assembled Babylon! fair youths  
 And hoary Elders, Warriors, Counsel-  
   lors,  
 And bright eyed Women, down my  
   festal board  
 Reclining! oh ye thousand living men,  
 Do ye not hold your charter'd breath  
   from me?  
 And I can plunge your souls in wine  
   and joy;  
 Or by a word, a look, dismiss you all  
 To darkness and to shame: yet, are ye  
   not  
 Proud of the slavery that thus enthrals  
   you?  
 What king, what ruler over subject man  
 Or was, or is, or shall be like Bel-  
   shazzar?  
 I summon from their graves the  
   sceptred dead  
 Of elder days, to see their shame. I  
   cry  
 Unto the cloudy Past, unfold the  
   thrones  
 That glorified the younger world: I call  
 To the dim Future—lift thy veil and  
   show  
 The destined lords of humankind: they  
   rise,  
 They bow their veil'd heads to the dust,  
   and own  
 The throne whereon Chaldea's Monarch  
   sits,  
 The height and pinnacle of human  
   glory.  
 Oh ancient cities, o'er whose streets  
   the grass  
 Is green, whose name hath wither'd  
   from the face  
 Of earth! Oh ye by rich o'erflowing  
   Nile,  
 Memphis, and hundred-gated Thebes—  
   and thou,  
 Assyrian Nineveh, and ye golden tow-  
   ers  
 That redden o'er the Indian streams,  
   what are ye  
 To Babylon—Eternal Babylon!  
 That's girt with bulwarks strong as  
   adamant,  
 O'er whom Euphrates' restless waves  
   keep watch,

That, like the high and everlasting  
Heavens,  
Grows old, yet not less glorious? Yes,  
to you  
I turn, oh azure-curtain'd palaces!  
Whose lamps are stars, whose music,  
the sweet motion  
Of your own spheres, in whom the  
banqueters  
Are Gods, nor fear my Babylonian halls,  
Even with your splendours to com-  
pare.

Bring wine!  
I see your souls are jocund as mine  
own:  
Pour in yon vessels of the Hebrews'  
God  
Belshazzar's beverage—pour it high.  
Hear, earth!  
Hear, Heaven! my proud defiance!—  
Oh, what man,  
What God—

SABARIS, AND MANY VOICES.

The king! the king! look to the king!

ARIOCH.

Where? I can see nor king nor people—  
nothing  
But a bewildering, red, and gloom-like  
light  
That swallows up the fiery canopy  
Of lamps.

SABARIS.

Hath blindness smitten thee?

ARIOCH.

I know not;  
But all things swim around me in a  
darkness  
That dazzles—

SABARIS.

See, his shuddering joints are  
loosen'd,  
And his knees smite each other: such  
a face  
Is seen in tombs:—what means it?

ARIOCH.

See'st not thou  
That taunted'st me but now—upon the  
wall—  
There—there—it moves—

BELSHAZZAR.

Oh dark and bodiless hand,  
What art thou—thus upon my palace  
wall  
Gliding in shadowy, slow, gigantic  
blackness?  
Lo! fiery letters, where it moves, break  
out:  
'Tis there—'tis gone:—'tis there again—  
no, nought  
But those strange characters of flame,  
that burn  
Upon the unkindled wall:—I cannot  
read them—  
Can ye?

I see your quivering lips that speak  
not—  
Sabaris—Arioch—Captains—Elders—all  
As pale and horror-stricken as myself!  
Are there no wiser? Call ye forth  
the Dreamers,  
And those that read the stars, and every  
priest,  
And he that shall interpret best shall  
wear  
The scarlet robe and chain of gold, and  
sit  
Third ruler of my realm. Away!—No  
—leave me not  
To gaze alone;—alone, on those pale  
signs  
Of destiny—the unextinguishable,  
The indelible—Strew, strew my couch  
where best  
I may behold what sears my burning  
eyeballs  
To gaze on—and the cold blood round  
my heart  
To stand, like snow. No—ache mine  
eyes, and quiver  
My palsied limbs—I cannot turn away—  
Here am I bound as by thrice link'd  
brass,  
Here, till the burthen of mine ignorance  
Be from my loaded soul taken off, in  
silence  
Deep as the midnight round a place of  
tombs.

*The Summit of the Temple.*

BENINA.

How long, O Lord! how long must I  
endure

This restlessness of danger?—I have wish'd

That even the worst were come, I am so sick

And weary with suspense: I have sate and gazed

Upon the silent moon, as she pursued Her journey to yon blue celestial height. Pilgrim of Heaven! the white translucent clouds,

Through which she wanders, fall away, nor leave

A taint upon her spotless orb: Shall I, O Lord! emerge in purity as stainless From the dark clouds that dim mine earthly course?

And sometimes as a whispering sound came up,

Though but the voice of some light breathing wind

Along the stair, I felt my trembling heart,

And I grew guilty of a timorous doubt In Him, whose guardian hand is o'er me.

Hark!

Hark! all around—above—beneath—it bursts,

The long deep roll of—in yon cloudless skies:

It cannot be God's thunder, and the fires,

Blue as the sulphurous lightning, rise from earth,

Not Heaven. Oh madly impious! dare ye thus

Mimic the all-destroying arms that rage Against the guilty? the vast temple shakes,

And all the clouded atmosphere is red With the hell-born tempest—like to

rushing chariots

Upon a stony way, like some vast forest Ablaze with an heaven-kindled conflagration,

It comes, it comes—as in a tent of clouds,

Rent at each moment by the flashing light,

The gloom rolls back—it bursts. Speak! —who art thou,

Whose robes are woven as from the starry Heavens?

What means that sceptre, and the wreaths, like mist,

'That turban thy dusk brow?—I know thee now—

I see it grow into a hideous likeness—Kalassan!

KALASSAN.

Oh most sweet humility,  
That doth disdain the modest palliation  
Of being a Deity's enforced bride;  
Her fond detection pierces every veil,  
And springs in raptures to her mortal lover.

BENINA.

Oh can I wonder that thou dost bely  
The innocent helpless virgin, when thy falsehood

Aspires with frantic blasphemy t' attain  
The immaculate Heavens?

KALASSAN.

Roll on! I say,—roll on  
My bridal music! the ear-stunning tam-  
bour—

Blaze forth my marriage fires!

BENINA.

Avant!—My cries—

KALASSAN.

Thy cries! Thou might'st as well, on  
Taurus' brow

Call to the shipman on the Caspian Sea!  
See'st thou how far thou art from  
earth?

BENINA.

See'st thou  
How near to Heaven?

KALASSAN.

To Heaven! behold, the stars  
Pierce not the cool pavilion, where soft  
Darkness,

Our handmaid, hangs her nuptial  
canopy.

At times illumin'd by the flashing light  
That loves to linger on thy kindling  
beauty.

BENINA.

'Tis as he says!—nor sound, nor gleam  
of succour—

Thy bride—oh, Adonijah!—ah, no bride  
Of thine!—lost—lost to thee—would  
'twere by death!

Is't for the sin of loving thee too fondly  
I am deserted!—Spare me, Man of Ter-  
ror,

And prayers for thee (they say, God  
loves the prayers

Of the undefiled) shall rise as con-  
stantly

As summer-dews at eve.

KALASSAN.

Now louder! louder!

Let there be triumph in your martial  
sounds.

BENINA.

Oh God! oh God! I have condemn'd  
myself,

And fallen from the faith. Ah, not for  
me!

For thine own glory suffer not the  
Heathen

To boast of—Ha!—all silence, and all  
gloom—

I tremble—but he trembles too—

KALASSAN.

With wrath!

Slaves! wherefore have ye quench'd  
mine earthly light,

And still'd my storm?

VOICE BELOW.

Kalassan!

KALASSAN.

Slaves!

VOICE.

Kalassan!

BENINA.

Thou'rt call'd—

VOICE.

Kalassan! to Belshazzar's presence

We are summon'd:—Priest, Diviner,  
Seer, thyself;—

If thou delay'st, stern Arioeh's sword  
must sever

The disobedient head!

BENINA.

With tears, not words,

I bless thee, Lord!

KALASSAN.

Is this thy God?

BENINA.

My God,

In his omnipotence, doth make the  
wrath

Of hurricanes and desolating fires  
His ministers—why not the breath of  
Kings?

KALASSAN.

The hour will come in which to tame  
thy scorn!

BENINA.

The hour is come that frees me from  
thy presence:

Haste, haste—

VOICE.

Kalassan!

KALASSAN.

Slaves! I come.

BENINA.

Away!

Thou'lt pardon me my fond solicitude,  
Impatient of thy lingering.

KALASSAN.

Fare thee well

Till I return.

BENINA.

Till thou return'st—He's gone!

I did not think that I could hear his  
tread,

His angry tread, with such a deep de-  
light.

Oh! my fond parents! when we meet  
again,  
We shall not meet with strange averted  
looks:  
Ye will not, in sad pity, take me back  
A shamed and blighted child to your  
cold bosoms.  
And thou, betroth'd, belov'd—I shall  
endure  
To stand before thy face, nor wish the  
earth  
To shroud me from thine unrepublishing  
gaze;  
For were I all I fear'd, thou had'st  
ne'er reproach'd me!  
And oh, sweet Siloe! oh, my Fathers'  
land!  
Land where the feet may wander where  
they will—  
Land where the heart may love without  
a fear!  
I feel that I shall tread thee; for the  
Lord  
Pours not his mercies in a sparing  
measure.  
This is the earnest of his love—the seal  
With which he marks us for his own,  
his blest,  
His ransom'd! Oh! fair Zion, lift thou  
up  
Thy crown, that glitters to the morning  
Sun!  
They come—thy lost, thy banish'd chil-  
dren come—  
And thy streets rise to sounds of mel-  
ody!

*The Hall of Banquet, with the Fiery  
Letters on the Wall.*

ARIOCH.

Hath the King spoken?

SABARIS.

Not a word: as now,  
He hath sate, with eyes that strive to  
grow familiar  
With those red characters of fire: but  
still  
The agony of terror hath not pass'd  
From his chill frame. But, if a word,  
a step,

A motion, from those multitudes re-  
clined  
Down each long festal board; the burst-  
ing string  
Of some shrill instrument; or even the  
wind,  
Whispering amid the plumes and shak-  
ing lamps,  
Disturb him—by some mute, imperious  
gesture,  
Or by his brow's stern anger, he com-  
mands  
All the vast Halls to silence.

ARIOCH.

Peace! he hears  
Our murmur'd speech.

SABARIS.

No.

ARIOCH.

Did ye not observe him,  
When his hand fell upon the all-ruling  
sceptre,  
The bitter and self-mocking laugh that  
pass'd  
O'er his pale cheek?

SABARIS.

His lips move, but he speaks not!  
All still again—

ARIOCH.

They are here:—the Priests and  
Seers;  
Their snowy garments sweep the Hall.

SABARIS.

Behold!  
He motions them to advance and to  
retreat  
At once—and pants, yet shudders, to  
demand  
Their answer.

BELSHAZZAR.

Oh! Chaldea's worshipp'd Sages—  
Oh! men of wisdom, that have pass'd  
your years—  
Your long and quiet, solitary years,



In tracing the dim sources of th' events  
 That agitate this world of man—oh! ye  
 That in the tongues of every clime dis-  
   course;  
 Ye that hold converse with the eternal  
   stars,  
 And, in their calm prophetic courses,  
   read  
 The destinies of empires; ye whose  
   dreams  
 Are throng'd with the predestined  
   images  
 Of things that are to be; to whom the  
   Fates  
 Unfold their secret councils; to whose  
   sight  
 The darkness of Futurity withdraws,  
 And one vast Present fills all Time—  
   behold  
 Yon burning characters! and read and  
   say  
 Why the dark Destinies have hung their  
   sentence  
 Thus visible to the sight, but to the mind  
 Unsearchable?—Ye have heard the rich  
   reward;  
 And I but wait to see whose neck shall  
   wear  
 The chain of glory—  
       Ha! each pale fallen lip  
 Voiceless! and each upon the other  
   turns  
 His wan and questioning looks.—  
   Kalassan! thou  
 Art like the rest, and gazest on thy fel-  
   lows  
 In blank and sullen ignorance.—Spurn  
   them forth!  
 Ye wise! ye learned! ye with Fate's  
   mysteries  
 Entrusted! Spurn, I say, and trample  
   on them!  
 Let them be outcast to the scorn of  
   slaves!  
 Let children pluck their beards, and ev-  
   ery voice  
 Hoot at them as they pass!  
       Despair! Despair!  
 This is thy palace now! No throne, no  
   couch  
 Beseems the King, whose doom is on  
   his walls  
 Emblazed—yet whose vast empire finds  
   not one

Whose faithful love can show its mystic  
   import!  
 Low on the dust, upon the pavement-  
   stone,  
 Belshazzar takes his rest!—Ye hosts  
   of slaves,  
 Behold your King! the Lord of Baby-  
   lon!—  
 Speak not—for he that speaks, in other  
   words  
 But to expound those fiery characters,  
 Shall ne'er speak more!

NITOCRIS (*entering*).

As thou did'st give command,  
 My son, I'm here to see the all-glorious  
   feast  
 That shames the earth, and copes with  
   Heaven!  
                   Great Powers!  
 Is't thus? Oh! look not with that mute  
   reproach,  
 More terrible than anger, on thy moth-  
   er!  
 Oh, pardon my rash taunts!—my son!  
   my son!  
 Thou art but now the beauteous, smil-  
   ing child,  
 That from my bosom drank the flow-  
   ing life;  
 By whom I've pass'd so many sleepless  
   nights  
 In deeper joy than slumber e'er could  
   give!  
 The sole refreshment of my weary  
   spirit  
 To gaze on thee!—Alas! 'twas all my  
   crime:—  
 I gave to thy young lips the mantling  
   cup  
 Of luxury and pride; I taught thee first  
 That the wide earth was made for thee,  
   and man  
 Born for thy uses!

BELSHAZZAR.

And thou wilt give me, then, a life more  
   precious  
 Than that I once received of thee.

NITOCRIS.

'Twas he;  
 I saw him as I pass'd along the courts,

The Hebrew, that, when visions of the  
night  
Shook the imperial soul of Nabonassar,  
Like one to whom the dimly-peopled  
realms  
Of sleep were clear as the bright noon-  
tide Heavens,  
Spake—

BELSHAZZAR.

With the speed of lightning call him  
hither.  
No more, my mother—till he comes, no  
more.

ARIOCH.

King of the world, he's here.

BELSHAZZAR.

Not yet! not yet!  
Delay him! hold him back!—My soul's  
not strung  
To the dire knowledge.

Up the voiceless hall  
He moves; nor doth the white and  
ashen fear,  
That paints all faces, change one line  
of his.

Audacious slave! walks he erect and  
firm,

When kings are groveling on the earth?  
—Give place!

Why do ye crowd around him? Back!  
I say.

Is your king heard—or hath he ceased  
to rule?

NITOCRIS.

Alas! my son, fear levels kings and  
slaves.

BELSHAZZAR.

Art thou that Daniel of the Hebrew  
race,  
In whom the excellence of wisdom  
dwells

As in the Gods? I have heard thy fame:  
—behold

Yon mystic letters, flaming on the wall.  
That, in the darkness of their fateful  
import,

Baffle the wisest of Chaldea's sages!  
Read, and interpret; and the satrap robe

Of scarlet shall invest thy limbs; the  
chain  
Of gold adorn thy neck; and all the  
world  
Own thee third ruler of Chaldea's  
realm!

DANIEL.

Belshazzar, be thy gifts unto thyself,  
And thy rewards to others. I, the serv-  
ant

Of God, will read God's writing to the  
King.

The Lord of Hosts to thy great An-  
cestor,

To Nabonassar, gave the all-ruling scep-  
tre

O'er all the nations, kingdoms, lan-  
guages;

Lord paramount of life and death, he  
slew

Where'er he will'd; and where he will'd  
men lived;

His word exalted, and his word de-  
based;

And so his heart swell'd up; and, in its  
pride,

Arose to Heaven! But then the Lord  
of earth

Became an outcast from the sons of  
men—

Companion of the browsing beasts! the  
dews

Of night fell cold upon his crownless  
brow,

And the wild asses of the desert fed  
Round their unenvied peer! And so he  
knew

That God is Sovereign o'er earth's  
sceptred Lords.

But thou, his son, unwarn'd, untaught,  
untamed,

Belshazzar, hast arisen against the Lord,  
And in the vessels of his house hast  
quaff'd

Profane libations, 'mid thy slaves and  
women,

To gods of gold, and stone, and wood;  
and laugh'd

The King of Kings, the God of Gods,  
to scorn.

Now hear the words, and hear their se-  
cret meaning—

"Number'd!" twice "Number'd!"  
Weigh'd! Divided!" King,

Thy reign is number'd, and thyself art  
weigh'd,  
And wanting in the balance, and thy  
realm  
Sever'd, and to the conquering Persian  
given!

ARIOCH.

What vengeance will he wreak? The  
pit of lions—  
The stake—

BELSHAZZAR.

Go—lead the Hebrew forth, array'd  
In the proud robe, let all the city hail  
The honour'd of Belshazzar. Oh! not  
long  
Will that imperial name command your  
awe!  
And, oh! ye bright and festal halls,  
whose vaults  
Were full of sweet sounds as the sum-  
mer groves,  
Must yet be changed for chambers,  
where no tone  
Of music sounds, nor melody of harp,  
Or lute, or woman's melting voice?—  
My mother!—  
And how shall we two meet the coming  
ruin?  
In arms! thou say'st; but with what  
arms, to front  
The Invisible, that in the silent air  
Wars on us? Shall we seek some place  
of silence,  
Where the cold cypress shades our  
Father's tombs,  
And grow familiar with the abode of  
Death?  
And yet how calm, how fragrant, how  
serene  
The night!—When empires fall, and  
Fate thrusts down  
The monarchs from their ancient  
thrones, 'tis said,  
The red stars meet, with ominous, hos-  
tile fires;  
And the dark vault of Heaven flames  
all across  
With meteors; and the conscious earth  
is rock'd;  
And foaming rivers burst their shores!  
But now,  
Save in my soul, there is no prescient  
dread:—

Nought but my fear-struck brow is  
dark and sad.  
All sleeps in moonlight silence: ye can  
wave,  
Oh happy gardens! in the cool night  
airs  
Your playful branches; ye can rise to  
Heaven,  
And glitter, my unconscious palace-tow-  
ers;  
No gliding hand, no Prophet's voice,  
to you  
Hath rent the veil that hides the awful  
future!  
Well, we'll go rest once more on kingly  
couches,  
My mother, and we'll wake and feel that  
earth  
Still trembles at our nod, and see the  
slaves  
Reading their fate in our imperial  
looks!  
And then—and then—Ye Gods! that  
I had still  
Nought but my shuddering and distract-  
ing fears;  
That those dread letters might resume  
once more  
Their dark and unintelligible brightness;  
Or that 'twere o'er, and I and Babylon  
Were—what a few short days or hours  
will make us!

*Above the City.*

THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

The hour is come! the hour is come!  
With voice  
Heard in thy inmost soul, I summon  
thee,  
Cyrus, the Lord's anointed! And thou  
River,  
That flow'st exulting in thy proud ap-  
proach  
To Babylon, beneath whose shadowy  
walls  
And brazen gates, and gilded palaces,  
And groves, that gleam with marble  
obelisks,  
Thy azure bosom shall repose, with  
lights  
Fretted and chequer'd like the starry  
heavens:  
I do arrest thee in thy stately course,

By Him that pour'd thee from thine  
ancient fountain,  
And sent thee forth, even at the birth  
of Time,  
One of his holy streams, to lave the  
mounts  
Of Paradise. Thou hear'st me: thou  
dost check

Abrupt thy waters, as the Arab chief  
His headlong squadrons. Where the  
unobserved

Yet toiling Persian breaks the ruining  
mound,

I see thee gather thy tumultuous  
strength;

And, through the deep and roaring  
Naharmalcha,

Roll on, as proudly conscious of ful-  
filling

The Omnipotent command! While, far  
away,

The lake, that slept but now so calm,  
nor moved

Save by the rippling moonshine, heaves  
on high

Its foaming surface, like a whirlpool  
gulf,

And boils and whitens with the unwont-  
ed tide.

But silent as thy billows used to flow,  
And terrible the hosts of Elam move,  
Winding their darksome way profound,  
where man

Ne'er trod, nor light e'er shone, nor air  
from Heav'n

Breathed. Oh! ye secret and unfath-  
om'd depths,

How are ye now a smooth and royal  
way

For th' army of God's vengeance! Fel-  
low slaves,

And ministers of the Eternal purpose,  
Not guided by the treacherous injured  
sons

Of Babylon, but by my mightier arm,  
Ye come, and spread your banners, and  
display

Your glittering arms as ye advance, all  
white

Beneath th' admiring moon. Come on!  
the gates

Are open!—I see on either side o'er-  
flow

The living deluge of arm'd men, and  
cry

Begin, begin, with fire and sword begin  
The work of wrath. Upon my shadowy  
wings

I pause and float a little while to see  
Mine human instruments fulfil my task  
Of final ruin. Then I mount, I fly,  
And sing my proud song, as I ride the  
clouds,

That stars may hear, and all the hosts  
of worlds,

That live along the interminable space,  
Take up Jehovah's everlasting triumph!

*The Streets of Babylon.*

ADONIJAH, IMLAH.

ADONIJAH.

Imlah! this way he motion'd me to pass.

IMLAH.

My son! (alas! I ever call thee son,  
Though my old childless heart but  
bleeds the more  
At that fond name), the broad Euphra-  
tes lies

That way, nor boat nor bark is wont to  
moor

By that inhospitable pier; he meant  
Toward the Temple—that way leads not  
thither.

ADONIJAH.

Father, the Lord will make a way,  
where'er

His Prophets do direct our feet. Thou  
saw'st not

As I; they led him at the king's com-  
mand

Along the streets, in scarlet clad, and  
made

Their trumpets clamour, and their voices  
shout

Before great Daniel; but it seem'd he  
mark'd

Nor trumpet sound, nor voice of man:  
the garb,

Th' array, the triumph touch'd not him:  
he held

A strange, elate, and voiceless inter-  
course

With some dark being in the clouds;  
for now

I saw him, as the torches shone upon him—  
 His brow like some crown'd warrior's,  
 when his hosts  
 Are spreading, in their arm'd magnificence,  
 Over a conquer'd realm; and now he seem'd  
 To count impatient the slow time; and now  
 He look'd, where in the distant darkness rose  
 The Temple, now where still the palace shone  
 With its rich festal light, as though he watch'd  
 And listen'd for some earthquake to o'erthrow them.  
 His ominous looks were terrible with ruin;  
 The majesty of God's triumphant vengeance  
 Was in his tread: even thus the Patriarch look'd,  
 When, mounting in his ark, he saw the deluge  
 Come sweeping o'er the doom'd yet heedless world.  
 Something, be sure, the hand of God prepares  
 To rescue, to revenge.

IMLAH.

Too late! too late!  
 Oh that last night!

ADONIJAH.

My father!

IMLAH.

Thou art right;  
 'Twas rashly, madly spoken—but my spirit  
 Is wrung almost to find a deadly pleasure  
 In madly uttering what the heart abhors.  
 I'll on with thee.

ADONIJAH.

He motion'd me alone.

IMLAH.

He did—and he must be obey'd: farewell,  
 Dear youth—dear son! if thou should'st meet with her  
 Cast forth in scorn, and groveling on the earth,  
 Chide her not, Adonijah—speak not to her,  
 Lest thy compassion seem to mock her shame:  
 But, pray thee, lead her to the old man's home—  
 To the old man's heart, that will not love her less,  
 Though his love have less of pride and more of sorrow.  
 Farewell, and prosper!  
 I'll go wander on  
 Through the dusk streets. Poor Naomi!  
 I left thee,  
 Thy wretchedness had wrought its own relief,  
 Asleep. Oh thou, if thou should'st never wake,  
 Thrice bless'd. Belovéd, I should mourn for thee,  
 But envy while I mourn'd.  
 Great King of vengeance,  
 God of my fathers! thou art here at length.  
 Behold! behold! from every street the flames  
 Burst out, and armed men, proud, conquering men,  
 Move in the blaze they've kindled to destroy.  
 Are ye the avenging Spirits of the Lord,  
 Descended on the blast, and clouding o'er  
 The Heavens, as ye come down, with that red cope  
 Deeper than lightning? No—it is the Mede,  
 The ravaging, the slaughtering, merciless Mede.  
 This way they fly, with shrieks, and clashing arms,  
 And multitudes that choke th' impassable streets,  
 Till the fierce conqueror hew his ruthless way.  
 Shall not I fly? and wherefore? Oh! waste on,



And burn, triumphant stranger! trample  
down  
Master and slave alike!—there is one  
house  
Thou canst not make more desolate:  
thou canst not  
Pour ills on any of these guilty roofs,  
So hateful as have burst on mine.—  
Who comes?

## NITOCRIS, IMLAH.

NITOCRIS.

My son! my son! I heard the cries—I  
saw  
The flames; I rush'd through all the  
shrieking palace  
To seek him—and I found him not: and  
sprang  
To find him, where I thought not, where  
I knew not.  
One moment do I plunge into the gloom  
Of some dark court, to shun the foe—  
the next,  
I bless the angry and destroying light,  
Because I think it may disclose the face,  
The beauteous face of mine Imperial  
Boy.  
I've pass'd by widows, and by frantic  
mothers,  
That howl and tear their hair o'er their  
dead children:  
I cannot find my child, even to perform  
That last sad duty of my love—to  
mourn him.  
I've cried aloud, and told them I'm their  
queen;  
They gaze on me, and mock me with  
their pity,  
Showing that queens can be as desolate  
As slaves: and sometimes have I paused  
and stoop'd  
O'er dying faces; with a hideous hope  
Of seeing my son! I dare not cry Bel-  
shazzar,  
Lest he should hear me, and come forth  
and meet  
The slaughtering sword. Ye Gods! his  
very beauty  
And majesty will mark him out for  
slaughter:

And the fierce Persian, that in weary  
pride  
May scorn to flesh his sword on meaner  
heads,  
Will win himself an everlasting glory,  
By slaying th' unarm'd, the succourless  
Belshazzar.  
Here's one—hast seen him? Slave, I'll  
give thee gold,  
I'll give thee kingdoms—ah! what gold  
or kingdoms  
Hath the sad queen of captive Babylon  
To give? but thou hast haply known the  
love  
That parents bear to those who have  
been a part  
Of their own selves; whose lives are  
twined with theirs  
So subtly, that 'twere worse than death  
to part them.  
Hast seen the king—my son—the pride  
of kings—  
My peerless son?

IMLAH.

I had a child this morn,  
Beautiful as the doe upon the moun-  
tains,  
Pure as the crystal of the brook she  
drinks;  
And when they rent her from her  
father's heart,  
To death—oh no!—to deeper woe than  
death,  
The queen of Babylon swept proudly by,  
Nor stoop'd to waste her pity on the  
childless.

NITOCRIS.

Oh ye just Gods! but cruel in your  
justice!  
And never met ye more?

IMLAH.

No more!

NITOCRIS.

Great Heaven!  
I own your equal hand: the bitter  
chalice  
That we have given to others' lips, our  
own

Must to the dregs drink out. So, never  
 more  
 Shall I behold thee—not to wind thy  
 corpse—  
 To pour sweet ointments on thy clay  
 cold limbs.  
 Alas! and what did Nabonassar's daugh-  
 ter  
 In the dark streets alone? when there  
 were men  
 To rally, arms to array—my voice, my  
 look,  
 The hereditary terror that is said  
 To dwell on mine imperial brow, had  
 pour'd  
 Dismay and flight upon the conquering  
 Mede.  
 Semiramis, for empire, cast away  
 The woman, and went forth in brazen  
 arms.  
 I could not for my son!

My naked feet

Bleed where I move; and on my crown-  
 less head  
 (For what have I to do with crowns?)  
 beat cold  
 The chilling elements; till but now I  
 felt not  
 My loose, and thin, and insufficient rai-  
 ment.  
 Well, there's enough to shroud the dead;  
 and thee  
 To colder nakedness, my son! my son!  
 The spoiler will have stripp'd—

IMLAH.

God pardon me

For taunting her distress! Rest here,  
 oh queen!  
 Under this low and wretched roof thou  
 art safe;  
 The plunderer wars upon the gilded  
 palace,  
 Not the base hovel. There's a mother  
 there  
 As sad as thou, and sleep may be as  
 merciful  
 To thee as her.

NITOCRIS.

Sleep! sleep! with Babylon

In flames around me; Nabonassar's  
 realm,

The city of earth's sovereigns rushing  
 down,  
 The pride of countless ages, and the  
 glory,  
 By generations of triumphant kings  
 Rear'd up—my sire's, my husband's, and  
 my son's,  
 And mine own stately birthplace perish-  
 ing:  
 The summer gardens of my joy cut  
 down;  
 The ivory chambers of my luxury,  
 Where I was wed, and bore my beaute-  
 ous son,  
 How'd through by strangers! No—  
 I'll on, and find  
 Death or my son, or both! My glorious  
 city!  
 My old ancestral throne! thou'lt still  
 afford  
 A burial fire. I've lived a queen, the  
 daughter  
 Of kings, the wife, the mother—and  
 will die  
 Queen-like, with Babylon for my fu-  
 neral pile!

*Before the Temple.*

BENINA.

Oh thou dread night! what new and  
 awful signs  
 Crowd thy portentous hours, so calm  
 in heav'n,  
 With all thy stars and full-orb'd moon  
 serene  
 Sleeping on crystal and pellucid clouds!  
 How terrible on earth! as I rush'd down  
 The vacant stair, nor heard a living  
 sound,  
 Save mine own bounding footstep, all  
 at once  
 Methought Euphrates' rolling waters  
 sank  
 Into the earth; the gilded galleys rock'd,  
 And plunged and settled in the sandy  
 depths;  
 And the tall bridge upon its lengthening  
 pier  
 Seem'd to bestride a dark, unfathom'd  
 gulf.  
 Then, where blue waters and the ivory  
 decks  
 Of roval vessels, and their silver prows,

Reflected the bright lights of heav'n,  
 they shone  
 Upon the glancing armour, helms, and  
 spears  
 Of a vast army: then the stone-paved  
 walls  
 Rang with the weight of chariots, and  
 the gates  
 Of brass fell down with ponderous  
 clang: then sank  
 O'er the vast city one sepulchral silence,  
 As though the wondering conqueror  
 scarce believed  
 His easy triumph. But ye revellers  
 That lay at rest upon your festal gar-  
 ments,  
 The pleasant weariness of wine and  
 joy,  
 And the sweet dreams of your scarce-  
 ended pleasures,  
 Still hanging o'er your silken couches!  
 ye  
 Woke only, if ye woke indeed, to see  
 The Median scimitar that, red with  
 blood,  
 Flash'd o'er you, or the blaze of fire  
 that wrapt  
 In sulphurous folds the chambers of  
 your rest.  
 Oh Lord of Hosts! in thine avenging  
 hour  
 How dreadful art thou! Pardon if I  
 weep  
 When all my grateful heart should beat  
 with joy  
 For my deliverance.

KALASSAN, BENINA.

KALASSAN.

All is lost! Great Bel,  
 Thus, thus dost thou avenge thy broken  
 rite!  
 Now, by thy thunders, 'tis the beaute-  
 ous bride—  
 Thou givest her to me yet.

BENINA.

Miscreant! what mean'st thou?

KALASSAN.

'Twas love before; and now 'tis love  
 and vengeance;

And I will quaff the doubly-mantling  
 cup,  
 In all its richness.

BENINA.

Guilty man! look round,  
 Thou seest my God, the God of Gods,  
 reveal'd  
 In yon wide fires! Nor thou, nor one  
 of those  
 That walk the death-doom'd streets of  
 Babylon,  
 Have even an hour to live.

KALASSAN.

Then I've no hour  
 To waste. 'Tis said the Indian widows  
 mount  
 In pride and joy their husbands' funeral  
 pyres;  
 Thou, in thy deep devotion, shalt excel  
 them,  
 And wed thy bridegroom, for the loftier  
 glory  
 Of dying by his side.

BENINA.

Oh mercy!

KALASSAN.

Mercy!  
 Ask of the Babylonian maids and wives,  
 If they find mercy?

BENINA.

Ah! and I presumed  
 To speak of pitying others!

KALASSAN.

Come—What's here?

KALASSAN, BENINA, ADonIJAH.

ADonIJAH.

With unwet foot I trod the river  
 depths:  
 It is the privilege of Israel's sons  
 To walk through seas as on dry land.

BENINA.

Oh stranger!  
That bear'st a Persian scimitar—No  
stranger!  
Is it his angel, with his beauteous brow?  
His eyes, his voice—his claspings arms  
around me!—  
Mine own, my brave, my noble Adoni-  
jah!  
Too bounteous Heaven!

KALASSAN.

Fond slave! unclasp thine arms.

ADONIJAH.

What—must I rob the Persian of his  
victim?  
Oh! not in vain this bright and wel-  
come steel  
Glitter'd to court my grasp! What!  
the first foe  
My warrior arm hath met retreat before  
me?  
I'll follow thee to earth's remotest  
verge.

BENINA.

Oh! I could shriek, and weary Heaven  
with cries  
For my sad self—for thee—for thee!  
My lips  
Are parched to silence; and my throat—  
Come back!  
Their swords clash—some one falls—  
and groans:—he calls not  
Upon the God of Israel.—Ha! per-  
chance  
He cannot cry! All's dark.—Ah me!  
how strong,  
How dreadful was the Heathen in his  
strength!  
He's here!—I dare not ask, which art  
thou? which—  
Alas, prophetic spirit hast thou left me  
To ask? Oh Love! thou used to know  
his tread  
'Mong thousands!

ADONIJAH.

Sweet! where art thou?

BENINA.

On thy bosom.

ADONIJAH.

The Lord hath triumph'd by his ser-  
vant's hands:  
He lies in death, blaspheming his own  
Gods.

BENINA.

Merciful! I almost thank thee for the  
dread  
And danger of this night, that closes  
thus  
In such o'erpowering joy!

ADONIJAH.

Hast suffer'd nought  
But dread and danger?

BENINA.

What?

ADONIJAH.

Thou'st been where evil  
Riots unchecked, untamed!

BENINA.

Oh Adonijah!

I have endured thy lip upon my cheek,  
And I endure thine arms clasp'd fondly  
round me.  
And on thy bosom I recline, and look  
Upon thy face with eyes suffused with  
tears,  
But not of shame. What would'st thou  
more?

ADONIJAH.

Nought, nought.

Oh pardon that my jealous fears mis-  
doubted  
Thy pure, thy proud, thy holy love!  
Come on!  
Come to thy parents' home that wait  
for thee,  
And change the voiceless house of deso-  
lation  
To an abode of joy, as mute.  
Come! come!  
Beauteous as her that with her timbrel  
pass'd

Along the Red Sea depths, and cast her  
 song  
 Upon the free airs of the wilderness—  
 The song of joy, of triumph, of deliv-  
 erance!

*The Streets of Babylon in Flames.*

BELSHAZZAR.

I cannot fight nor fly: where'er I move,  
 On shadowy battlement, or cloud of  
 smoke,  
 That dark unbodied hand waves to and  
 fro,  
 And marshals me the way to death—  
 to death  
 That still eludes me. Every blazing  
 wall  
 Breaks out in those red characters of  
 fate;  
 And when I raised my sword to war,  
 methought  
 That dark-stoled Prophet stood be-  
 tween, and seem'd  
 Rebuking Heaven for its slow consum-  
 mation  
 Of his dire words.

I am alone: my slaves  
 Fled at the first wild outcry; and my  
 women  
 Closed all their doors against me—for  
 they knew me  
 Mark'd with the seal of destiny: no  
 hand,  
 Though I have sued for water, holds a  
 cup  
 To my parch'd lips; no voice, as I pass  
 on,  
 Hath bless'd me; from the very festal  
 garments,  
 That glitter'd in my halls, they shake  
 the dust:  
 Ev'n the priests spurn'd me, as ab-  
 horr'd of Heaven.  
 Oh! but the fiery Mede doth well avenge  
 me!  
 They're strew'd beneath my feet—  
 though not in worship!  
 Oh death! death! death! that art so  
 swift to seize  
 The conqueror on his triumph day, the  
 bride  
 Ere yet her wedding lamps have waned,  
 the king

While all mankind are kneeling at his  
 footstool—  
 Thou'rt only slow to him that knows  
 himself  
 Thy fated prey, that seeks within the  
 tomb  
 A dark retreat from wretchedness and  
 shame.  
 From shame!—the heir of Nabonassar's  
 glory!  
 From wretchedness!—the Lord of  
 Babylon—  
 Of golden and luxurious Babylon!  
 Alas! through burning Babylon! the  
 fallen,  
 The city of lamentation and of slaugh-  
 ter!  
 A fugitive and outcast, that can find,  
 Of all his realm, not even a grave!—  
 so base,  
 That even the conquering Mede dis-  
 dains to slay him!

*Before the House of Imlah.*

IMLAH, ADONIJAH, BENINA, NAOMI.

IMLAH.

Naomi! Naomi! look forth—she's here!

NAOMI.

I know she is—in dreams: through all  
 the night  
 I've seen her, gliding from the fountain  
 side  
 With the pure urn of water, or with  
 lips  
 Apart, and bashful voice, that faintly  
 breath'd  
 One of her country's songs! I've seen  
 her kneeling  
 In prayer, alas! that ne'er was heard  
 on high!  
 And thou hast scared my vision's joys  
 away—  
 To see—all heav'n on fire, and the vast  
 city—  
 Imlah! what mean those massy clouds  
 of smoke,  
 Those shrieks and clashings?—and—  
 that youth and maid,



Why stand they there? we need no sad  
remembrancers  
Of our deep desolation!

BENINA.

Doth my mother  
With such cold salutation welcome  
home  
Her child?

NAOMI.

No! no! ye can no more delude me!  
Twice have I woken, and heard that  
voice, and stretch'd  
My arms—

BENINA.

But hast not folded to thy bosom,  
As thus, thy child, thy lost, thy loved  
Benina!

NAOMI.

'Tis living flesh! it is a breathing lip!  
And the heart swells like—Oh no!—  
not like mine!  
Oh! thou twice born! the sorrow and  
the joy  
That I endured to bring my beauteous  
babe  
Into the world were nought to this!

BENINA.

Dear mother,  
May I ne'er cost thee bitterer tears  
than these—

IMLAH.

My father's God, thou show'dst thyself  
of old,  
By smiting water from the stony rock.  
And raining manna on the desert sands!  
Here is thy best—most gracious mir-  
acle!  
Making the childless heart to laugh with  
gladness;  
The eyes that had forgot to weep o'er-  
flow  
With tears delicious! Thou hast rais'd  
the dead,  
And to the widow given her shrouded  
child!  
But what was that pale boy to her that  
stands

So beautiful before us? What was  
death  
To her dark trial? And she's here—  
and life  
Bounds in her bosom—the young doves  
that erst,  
Ere yet the cold air soil'd their snowy  
plumes,  
Were offer'd in thy Temple not so pure!

NAOMI.

How cam'st thou hither?

BENINA.

Ask of him that led me—  
Of him—that all but I seem to have for-  
gotten.

ADONIJAH.

Love, I shall take a sweet revenge here-  
after,  
Resuming to myself the boon that now  
They have no time to thank me for.—  
What's he,  
That rushes where proud War disdains  
to spoil?  
That tread was wont to move in marble  
halls,  
To sounds of music. Round his limbs,  
that shake  
And quiver, as with pain, he wraps his  
robes,  
Like one men wont to gaze on. Even  
despair  
On such a brow looks noble!—Hark!  
he speaks—

THE ABOVE, BELSHAZZAR.

BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis come at last! the barbéd arrow  
drinks  
My life-blood. Mid the base abode of  
slaves  
I seem to stand: not here—my fathers  
set  
Like suns in glory! I'll not perish here,  
And stifle like some vile, forgotten  
lamp!  
Oh, dreadful God! is't not enough?—  
My state  
I equall'd with the Heavens—and wilt  
thou trample me

Beneath these—What are ye that crowd  
around me?

I have a dim remembrance of your  
forms

And voices. Are ye not the slaves that  
stood

This morn before me? and—

IMLAH.

Thou spurn'dst us from thee.

BELSHAZZAR.

And ye'll revenge you on the clay-cold  
corpse.

IMLAH.

Fear not: our God, and this world's  
cruel usage,

Hath taught us early what kings learn  
too late.

BELSHAZZAR.

Ye know me, then—ye know the King  
of Babylon—

The King of dust and ashes? for what  
else

Is now the beauteous city—earth's de-  
light?

And what the King himself but—dust  
and ashes?

BENINA.

He faints—support him, dearest Adoni-  
jah!

BELSHAZZAR.

Mine eyes are heavy, and a swoon, a  
sleep

Swims o'er my head:—go, summon me  
the lutes,

That us'd to soothe me to my balmiest  
slumbers;

And bid the snowy-handed maidens fan  
The dull, hot air around me. 'Tis not  
well—

This bed—'tis hard and damp. I gave  
command

I would not lie but on the softest  
plumes

That the birds bear. Slaves! hear ye  
not?—'tis cold—

'Tis piercing cold!

BENINA.

Alas! he's little used

To feel the night winds on his naked  
brow:

He's breathing still—spread o'er him  
that bright mantle;

A strange, sad use for robes of sov-  
ereignty.

THE ABOVE, NITOCRIS.

NITOCRIS.

Why should I pass street after street,  
through flames

That make the hardy conqueror shrink;  
and stride

O'er heaps of dying, that look up and  
wonder

To see a living and unwounded being?  
Oh! mercifully cruel, they do slay

The child and mother with one blow!  
the bride

And bridegroom! I alone am spar'd, to  
die

Remote from all—from him with whom  
I've cherished

A desperate hope to mingle my cold  
ashes!

'Tis all the daughter of great Nabonas-  
sar

Hath now to ask!—I'll sit me down  
and listen,

And through that turbulent din of clat-  
tering steel,

And cries of murder'd men, and smoul-  
dering houses,

And th' answering trumpets of the  
Mede and Persian,

Summoning their bands to some new  
work of slaughter,

Anon one universal cry of triumph  
Will burst; and all the city, either host,

In mute and breathless admiration, lie  
To hear the o'erpowering clamour that

announces

Belshazzar slain!—and then I'll rise and  
rush

To that dread place—they'll let me weep  
or die

Upon his corpse!—Old man, thou'st  
found thy child.

IMLAH.

I have—I have—and thine. Oh! rise  
not thus,  
In thy majestic joy, as though to mount  
Earth's throne again. Behold the King!

NITOCRIS.

My son!  
On the cold earth—not there, but on my  
bosom—  
Alas! that's colder still. My beauteous  
boy,  
Look up and see—

BELSHAZZAR.

I can see nought—all's darkness!

NITOCRIS.

Too true: he'll die, and will not know  
me! Son!  
Thy mother speaks—thy only kindred  
flesh,  
That lov'd thee ere thou wert; and,  
when thou'rt gone,  
Will love thee still the more!

BELSHAZZAR.

Have dying kings  
Lovers or kindred? Hence! disturb me  
not.

NITOCRIS.

Shall I disturb thee, crouching by thy  
side  
To die with thee? Oh! how he used to  
turn  
And nestle his young cheek in this full  
bosom,  
That now he shrinks from! No! it is  
the last  
Convulsive shudder of cold death. My  
son,  
Wait—wait, and I will die with thee—  
not yet—  
Alas! yet this was what I pray'd for—  
this—  
To kiss thy cold cheek, and inhale thy  
last—  
Thy dying breath.

IMLAH.

Behold! behold, they rise;  
Feebly they stand, by their united  
strength  
Supported. Hath yon kindling of the  
darkness,  
Yon blaze, that seems as if the earth  
and heaven  
Were mingled in one ghastly funeral  
pile,  
Arous'd them? Lo, the flames, like a  
gorg'd serpent,  
That slept in glittering but scarce-mov-  
ing folds,  
Now, having sprung a nobler prey,  
break out  
In tenfold rage.

ADONIJAH.

How like a lioness,  
Robb'd of her kingly brood, she glares!  
She wipes  
From her wan brow the gray discolour'd  
locks,  
Where used to gleam Assyria's diadem;  
And now and then her tenderest glance  
recurs  
To him that closer to her bleeding heart  
She clasps, as self-reproachful that  
aught earthly  
Distracts her from her one maternal  
care.

IMLAH.

More pale, and more intent, he looks  
abroad  
Into the ruin, as though he felt a pride  
Even in the splendour of the desolation!

BELSHAZZAR.

The hand—the unbodied hand—it moves  
—look there!  
Look where it points!—my beautiful  
palace—

NITOCRIS.

Look—  
The Temple of great Bel—

BELSHAZZAR.

Our halls of joy!

NITOCRIS.

'Earth's pride and wonder!

IMLAH.

Ay, o'er both the fire  
Mounts like a conqueror: here, o'er spacious courts,  
And avenues of pillars, and long roofs,  
From which red streams of molten gold  
pour down,  
It spreads, till all, like those vast fabrics, seem  
Built of the rich clouds round the setting sun—  
All the wide heavens, one bright and shadowy palace!  
But terrible here—th' Almighty's wrathful hand  
Everywhere manifest!—There the Temple stands,  
Tower above tower, one pyramid of flame;  
To which those kingly sepulchres by Nile  
Were but as hillocks to vast Caucasus!  
Aloof, the wreck of Nimrod's impious tower  
Alone is dark; and something like a cloud,  
But gloomier, hovers o'er it. All is mute:  
Man's cries, and clashing steel, and braying trumpet—

The only sound the rushing noise of fire!

Now, hark! the universal crash—at once

They fall—they sink—

ADONIJAH.

And so do those that rul'd them!  
The Palace, and the Temple, and the race  
Of Nabonassar, are at once extinct!  
Babylon and her kings are fallen forever!

IMLAH.

Without a cry, without a groan, behold them,  
Th' Imperial mother and earth-ruling son  
Stretch'd out in death! Nor she without a gleam  
Of joy expiring with her cheek on his:  
Nor he unconscious that with him the pride  
And terror of the world is fallen—th' abode  
And throne of universal empire—now  
A plain of ashes round the tombless dead!—  
Oh, God of hosts! Almighty, Everlasting!  
God of our Fathers, thou alone art great!

HENRY HART MILMAN (1791-1868).





BELSHAZZAR  
A SACRED DRAMA



# BELSHAZZAR

## A SACRED DRAMA.

*How art thou fallen from Heaven,  
O Lucifer, son of the morning! How  
art thou cut down to the ground, who  
didst weaken the nations!—Isaiah.*

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

BELSHAZZAR, king of Babylon.  
NITOCRIS, the queen mother.  
DANIEL, the Jewish Prophet.  
Courtiers, Astrologers, Parasites.  
Captive Jews, etc., etc.

*Scene—Babylon.*

*Time—Night.*

The subject is taken from the fifth chapter of the Prophet Daniel.

### PART I.

*Scene—Near the palace of Babylon.*

#### DANIEL AND CAPTIVE JEWS.

##### DANIEL.

Parent of Life and Light! Sole Source  
of Good!  
Whose tender mercies through the tide  
of time,  
In long successive order, have sustain'd,  
And sav'd the sons of Israel! Thou  
whose power  
Deliver'd righteous Noah from the flood,  
The whelming flood, the grave of human  
kind!  
Oh thou whose guardian care and out-  
stretch'd hand  
Rescued young Isaac from the lifted  
arm,  
Rais'd, at thy bidding, to devote a son,  
An only son, doom'd by his sire to die:  
O saving faith, by such obedience  
prov'd!  
O blest obedience, hallow'd thus by  
faith!

Thou, who in mercy sav'dst the chosen  
race  
In the wild desert, and didst there sus-  
tain them  
By wonder-working love, though they  
rebell'd  
And murmur'd at the miracles that sav'd  
them!  
O hear thy servant Daniel! hear and  
help!  
Thou, whose almighty power did after  
raise  
Successive leaders to defend our race;  
Who sentest valiant Joshua to the field,  
The people's champion, to the conquer'ing  
field,  
Where the revolving planet of the night,  
Suspended in her radiant round, was  
stay'd;  
And the bright sun arrested in his  
course,  
Stupendously stood still!

#### CHORUS OF JEWS.

##### I.

What ail'd thee, that thou stood'st still,  
O sun! nor did thy flaming orb decline!  
And thou, O moon! in Ajalon's low vale,  
Why didst thou long before thy period  
shine?

##### II.

Was it at Joshua's dread command,  
The leader of the Israelitish band?  
Yes—at a mortal bidding both stood  
still;  
'Twas Joshua's word, but 'twas Jeho-  
vah's will.

##### III.

What all-controlling hand had force  
To stop eternal Nature's constant  
course?  
The wand'ring moon to one fix'd spot  
confine,

But His whose fiat gave them first to shine?

DANIEL.

O Thou! who, when thy discontented host,  
Tir'd of Jehovah's rule, desir'd a king,  
In anger gav'st them Saul; and then again

Didst wrest the regal sceptre from his hand

To give it David—David, best belov'd!  
Illustrious David! poet, prophet, king;  
Thou who did'st suffer Solomon the wise  
To build a glorious Temple to thy name,—

O hear thy servants, and forgive us, too!  
If by severe necessity compell'd,  
We worship here—we have no temple now:

Altar or sanctuary none is left.

CHORUS OF JEWS.

O Judah! let thy captive sons deplore  
Thy far-fam'd temple's now no more!  
Fall'n is thy sacred fane, thy glory gone!

Fall'n is thy temple, Solomon!  
Ne'er did Barbaric kings behold,  
With all their shining gems, their burnish'd gold,

A fane so perfect, bright and fair:  
For God himself was wont t' inhabit there.

Between the cherubim his glory stood,  
While the high-priest alone the dazzling splendour view'd.

How fondly did the Tyrian artist strive,  
His name to latest time should live!  
Such wealth the stranger wonder'd to behold:

Gold were the tablets, and the vases gold.

Of cedar such an ample store,  
Exhausted Lebanon could yield no more.  
Bending before the Ruler of the sky,  
Well might the royal founder cry,  
Fill'd with an holy dread, a rev'rend fear,

Will God in very deed inhabit here?

The heaven of heavens beneath his feet,  
Is for the bright inhabitant unmeet:  
Archangels prostrate wait his high commands,

And will he deign to dwell in temples made with hands?

DANIEL.

Yes, Thou art ever present, Pow'r Supreme,

Not circumscrib'd by time, nor fix'd to space,

Confin'd to altars, nor to temples bound.  
In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,

In dungeons or on thrones, the faithful find Thee!

E'en in the burning caldron Thou wast near

To Shadrach and the holy brotherhood:  
The unhurt martyrs bless'd Thee in the flames,

They sought, and found Thee; call'd, and Thou wast there.

FIRST JEW.

How chang'd our state! Judah, thy glory's fallen!

Thy joys for hard captivity chang'd:  
And thy sad sons breathe the polluted air

Of Babylon, where deities obscene  
Insult the living God; and to his servants,

The priests of wretched idols made with hands,

Show contumelious scorn.

DANIEL.

'Tis heaven's high will.

SECOND JEW.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!

If I not fondly cherish thy lov'd image,  
E'en in the giddy hour of thoughtless mirth;

If I not rather view thy prostrate walls  
Than haughty Babylon's imperial tow'rs,  
Then may my tongue refuse to frame the strains

Of sweetest harmony, my rude right hand

Forget, with sounds symphonious, to accord

The harp of Jesse's son to Sion's song.

## FIRST JEW.

Oft on Euphrates' ever verdant banks  
 Where drooping willows form a mourn-  
   ful shade  
 With all the pride which prosp'rous for-  
   tunes give,  
 And all th' unfeeling mirth of happy  
   men,  
 Th' insulting Babylonians ask a song;  
 Such songs as erst in better days were  
   sung  
 By Korah's sons, or heav'n-taught Asaph  
   set  
 To loftiest measures; then our bursting  
   hearts  
 Feel all their woes afresh; the galling  
   chain  
 Of bondage crushes then the free-born  
   soul  
 With wringing anguish from the trem-  
   bling lip.  
 Th' unfinish'd cadence falls; and the big  
   tear,  
 While it relieves, betrays the wo-fraught  
   soul.  
 For who can view Euphrates' pleasant  
   stream,  
 Its drooping willows and its verdant  
   banks,  
 And not to wounded memory recall  
 The piny groves of fertile Palestine,  
 The vales of Solyma, and Jordan's  
   stream!

## DANIEL.

Firm faith and deep submission to high  
   heaven  
 Will teach us to endure without a mur-  
   mur  
 What seems so hard. Think what the  
   holy host  
 Of patriarchs, saints, and prophets have  
   sustain'd,  
 In the blest cause of truth! And shall  
   not we,  
 O men of Judah! dare what these have  
   dar'd  
 And boldly pass through the refining  
   fire  
 Of fierce affliction? Yes, be witness.  
   Heaven!  
 Old as I am, I will not shrink at death,  
 Come in what shape it may, if God so  
   will,

By peril to confirm and prove my faith.  
 Oh! I would dare yon den of hungry  
   lions,  
 Rather than pause to fill the task as-  
   sign'd  
 By wisdom Infinite. Nor think I boast,  
 Not in myself, but in Thy strength I  
   trust,  
 Spirit of God!

## FIRST JEW.

Prophet, thy words support,  
 And raise our sinking souls.

## DANIEL.

Behold yon palace;  
 There proud Belshazzar keeps his wan-  
   ton court!  
 I knew it once beneath another lord,  
 His grandsire,\* who subdu'd Jehoiachin,  
 And hither brought sad Judah's captive  
   tribes;  
 And with them brought the rich and  
   precious relics  
 Of our fam'd temple; all the holy treas-  
   ure,  
 The golden vases, and the sacred cups,  
 Which grac'd in happier times, the sanc-  
   tuary.

## SECOND JEW.

May He to whose blest use they were  
   devoted,  
 Preserve them from pollution; and once  
   more,  
 In His own gracious time restore the  
   temple!

## DANIEL.

I, with some favour'd youths of Jewish  
   race  
 Was lodg'd in the king's palace, and  
   instructed  
 In all the various learning of the East;  
 But He, on whose great name our fathers  
   call'd,  
 Preserv'd us from the perils of a court,  
 Warn'd us to guard our youthful appe-  
   tites,  
 And still with holy fortitude reject  
 The pamp'ring viands Luxury presented;  
 Fell Luxury; more perilous to youth

\* *Nebuchadnezzar.*



Than storms or quicksands, poverty or chains:

SECOND JEW.

He who can guard 'gainst the low baits of sense,  
Will find Temptation's arrows hurtless strike

Against the brazen shield of Temperance.  
For 'tis th' inferior appetites enthrall  
The man, and quench th' immortal light within him;

The senses take the soul an easy prey,  
And sink th' imprison'd spirit into brute.

DANIEL.

Twice,\* by the Spirit of God, did I expound

The visions of the king; his soul was touch'd,

And twice did he repent, and prostrate fall

Before the God of Daniel: yet again,  
Pow'r, flattery, and prosperity, undid him.

When from the lofty ramparts of his palace

He view'd the splendours of the royal city,

That magazine of wealth, which proud Euphrates

Wafts from each distant corner of the earth;

When he beheld the adamantine tow'rs,  
The brazen gates, the bulwarks of his strength,

The pendant gardens, Art's stupendous work,

The wonder of the world! the proud Chaldean,

Mad with th' intoxicating fumes which rise

When uncontroll'd ambition grasps at once

Dominion absolute, and boundless wealth,  
Forgot he was a man, forgot his God!

'This mighty Babylon is mine,' he cry'd;

'My wondrous pow'r, my godlike arm achiev'd it.

I scorn submission; own no Deity  
Above my own.'—While the blasphemers

spoke,

\*Daniel, chap. ii and iv.

The wrath of Heav'n inflicted instant vengeance;

Stripp'd him of that bright reason he abus'd;

And drove him from the cheerful haunts of men,

A naked, wretched, helpless, senseless thing;

Companion of the brutes, his equals now.

FIRST JEW.

Nor does his impious grandson, proud Belshazzar,

Fall short of his offences; nay, he wants  
The valiant spirit and the active soul

Of his progenitor; for Pleasure's slave,  
Though bound in silken chains, and only

tied  
In flowery fetters, seeming light and loose,

Is more subdu'd than the rash casual victim

Of anger or ambition; these indeed  
Burn with a fiercer, but a short-lived

fire;  
While pleasure with a constant flame

consumes,  
War slays her thousands, but destructive

Pleasure,  
More fell, more fatal, her ten thousands

slays:  
The young luxurious king she fondly

woos  
In ev'ry shape of am'rous blandishment;

With adulation smooth ensnares his soul;

With love betrays him, and with wine inflames.

She strews her magic poppies o'er his couch,

And with delicious opiates charms him down,

In fatal slumbers bound. Though Babylon

Is now, invested by the warlike troops  
Of royal Cyrus, Persia's valiant prince;

Who, in conjunction with the Median king,

Darius, fam'd for conquest, now prepares

To storm the city: not the impending horrors

Which ever wait a siege have pow'r to wake

To thought or sense th' intoxicated  
king.

DANIEL.

E'en in this night of universal dread,  
A mighty army threat'ning at the gates;  
This very night, as if in scorn of danger,  
The dissolute Belshazzar holds a feast  
Magnificently impious, meant to honour  
Belus, the fav'rite Babylonish idol.

Lewd parasites compose his wanton  
court,

Whose impious flatt'ries sooth his mon-  
strous crimes:

They justify his vices and extol

His boastful phrase, as if he were some  
god:

Whate'er he says, they say; what he  
commands,

Implicitly they do; they echo back

His blasphemies with shouts of loud  
acclaim;

And when he wounds the tortur'd ear  
of Virtue,

They cry "All hail! Belshazzar live for-  
ever!"

To-night a thousand nobles fill his hall,  
Princes, and all the dames who grace  
the court;

All but his virtuous mother, sage Nito-  
cris:

Ah! how unlike the impious king, her  
son!

She never mingles in the midnight fray,  
Nor crowns the guilty banquet with her  
presence.

The royal fair is rich in every virtue

Which can adorn the queen or grace the  
woman.

But for the wisdom of her prudent  
counsels

This wretched empire had been long  
undone.

Not fam'd Semiramis, Assyria's pride,  
Could boast a brighter mind or firmer  
soul;

Beneath the gentle reign of Merodach,\*  
Her royal lord, our nation tasted peace.

Our captive monarch, sad Jehoiachin,

Grown gray in a close prison's horrid  
gloom,

He freed from bondage; brought the  
hoary king

To taste once more the long-forgotten  
sweets

Of liberty and light, sustain'd his age,  
Pour'd in his wounds the lenient balm  
of kindness,

And blest his setting hour of life with  
peace.

[*Sound of trumpets is heard at a dis-  
tance.*]

FIRST JEW.

That sound proclaims the banquet is  
begun.

SECOND JEW.

Hark! the licentious uproar grows more  
loud,

The vaulted roof resounds with shouts  
of mirth,

And the firm palace shakes! Retire, my  
friends;

This madness is not meet for sober ears.  
If any of our race were found so near,

'Twould but expose us to the rude at-  
tack

Of ribaldry obscene and impious jests  
From these mad sons of Belial, more

inflam'd  
To deeds of riot by the wanton feast.

DANIEL.

Here part we then! but when again to  
meet

Who knows, save heaven? Yet, O my  
friends! I feel

An impulse more than human stir my  
breast.

Wrapt in prophetic vision,\* I behold  
Things hid as yet from mortal sight.

I see  
The dart of vengeance tremble in the  
air,

Ere long to pierce the impious king.  
E'en now

The desolating angel stalks abroad,  
And brandishes aloft the two-edg'd

sword  
Of retribution keen; he soon will strike,  
And Babylon shall weep as Sion wept.

Pass but a little while, and you shall  
see

Pass but a little while, and you shall  
see

\* See the Prophecies of Isaiah, chap.  
xivii, and others.

\* II Kings, chap. xxiv.

This queen of cities prostrate on the  
 earth.  
 This haughty mistress of the kneeling  
 world,  
 How shall she sit dishonour'd in the  
 dust,  
 In tarnish'd pomp and solitary wo!  
 How shall she shroud her glories in the  
 dark,  
 And in opprobrious silence hide her  
 head!  
 Lament, O virgin daughter of Chaldea!  
 For thou shalt fall! imperial queen,  
 shalt fall!  
 No more Sidonian robes shall grace thy  
 limbs.  
 To purple garments sackcloth shall suc-  
 ceed,  
 And sordid dust and ashes shall supply  
 The od'rous nard and cassia. Thou,  
 who said'st  
 I AM, and there is none beside me: thou,  
 E'en thou, imperial Babylon, shalt fall!  
 Thy glory quite eclips'd! The pleasant  
 sound  
 Of viol and of harp shall charm no  
 more;  
 Nor song of Syrian damsels shall be  
 heard,  
 Responsive to the lute's luxurious note:  
 But the loud bittern's cry, the raven's  
 croak,  
 The bat's fell scream, the lonely owl's  
 dull plaint,  
 And ev'ry hideous bird, with ominous  
 shriek,  
 Shall scare affrighted Silence from thy  
 walls:  
 While Desolation, snatching from the  
 hand  
 Of Time the scythe of ruin, sits aloft,  
 Or stalks in dreadful majesty abroad.  
 I see th' exterminating fiend advance,  
 E'en now I see her glare with horrid  
 joy,  
 See towers imperial mould'ring at her  
 touch;  
 She glances on the broken battlement,  
 She eyes the crumbling column, and  
 enjoys  
 The work of ages prostrate in the dust—  
 Then pointing to the mischiefs she has  
 made,  
 Exulting cries, This once was Babylon!

## PART II.

*Scene—the court of Belshazzar. The  
 king seated on a magnificent throne.  
 Princes, nobles, and attendants.  
 Ladies of the court. Music—A  
 superb banquet.*

FIRST COURTIER [*rises and kneels*].

Hail mighty king!

SECOND COURTIER.

Belshazzar, live forever!

THIRD COURTIER.

Sun of the world, and light of kings,  
 all hail!

FOURTH COURTIER.

With lowly rev'rence, such as best be-  
 comes  
 The humblest creatures of imperial  
 power,  
 Behold a thousand nobles bend before  
 thee!  
 Princes far fam'd, and dames of high  
 descent:  
 Yet all this pride of wealth, this boast  
 of beauty,  
 Shrinks into nought before thine awful  
 eye!  
 And lives or dies as the king frowns  
 or smiles!

BELSHAZZAR.

This is such homage as becomes your  
 loves,  
 And suits the mighty monarch of man-  
 kind.

FIFTH COURTIER.

The bending world should prostrate thus  
 before thee;  
 And pay not only praise, but adoration!  
 BELSHAZZAR (*rises and comes forward*).  
 Let dull Philosophy preach self-denial;  
 Let envious Poverty and snarling Age  
 Proudly declaim against the joys they  
 know not.  
 Let the deluded Jews, who fondly hope

Some fancied heaven hereafter, mortify,  
 And lose the actual blessings of this  
 world  
 To purchase others which may never  
 come.  
*Our* gods may promise less, but give us  
 more  
 Ill could my ardent spirit be content  
 With meagre abstinence and hungry  
 hope.  
 Let those misjudging Israelites who want  
 The nimble spirits and the active soul,  
 Call their blunt feelings virtue: let them  
 drudge,  
 In regular progression, through the  
 round  
 Of formal duty and of daily toil;  
 And when they want the genius to be  
 happy,  
 Believe their harsh austerity is good-  
 ness.  
 If there be gods, they meant we should  
 enjoy:  
 Why give us else these tastes and appe-  
 tites?  
 And why the means to crown them with  
 indulgence?  
 To burst the feeble bonds which hold  
 the vulgar,  
 Is noble daring.

## FIRST COURTIER.

And is therefore worthy  
 The high imperial spirit of Belshazzar.

## SECOND COURTIER.

Behold a banquet which the gods might  
 share!

## BELSHAZZAR.

To-night, my friends, your monarch shall  
 be blest  
 With ev'ry various joy; to-night is ours;  
 Nor shall the envious gods, who view  
 our bliss,  
 And sicken as they view, to-night dis-  
 turb us.  
 Bring all the richest spices of the East:  
 The od'rous cassia and the dropping  
 myrrh,  
 The liquid amber and the fragrant gums,  
 Rob Gilead of its balms, Belshazzar  
 bids,  
 And leave the Arabian groves without  
 an odour.

Bring freshest flow'rs, exhaust the  
 blooming spring,  
 Twine the green myrtle with the short-  
 liv'd rose;  
 And ever, as the blushing garland fades,  
 We'll learn to snatch the fugitive de-  
 light,  
 And grasp the flying joy ere it escapes  
 us.  
 Come—fill the smiling goblet for the  
 king;  
 Belshazzar will not let a moment pass  
 Unmark'd by some enjoyment! The full  
 bowl  
 Let ev'ry guest partake!  
 [*Courtiers kneel and drink.*]

## FIRST COURTIER.

Here's to the King!  
 Light of the world, and glory of the  
 earth,  
 Whose word is fate!

## BELSHAZZAR.

Yes; we are likest gods  
 When we have pow'r, and use it. What  
 is wealth  
 But the rich means to gratify desire?  
 I will not have a wish, a hope, a thought,  
 That shall not know fruition. What is  
 empire?  
 The privilege to punish and enjoy:  
 To feel our pow'r in making others fear  
 it;  
 To taste of Pleasure's cup till we grow  
 giddy,  
 And think ourselves immortal! This  
 is empire!  
 My ancestors scarce tasted of its joys:  
 Shut from the sprightly world, and all  
 its charms,  
 In cumbrous majesty, in sullen state  
 And dull unsocial dignity they liv'd;  
 Far from the sight of an admiring world,  
 That world, whose gaze makes half the  
 charms of greatness;  
 They nothing knew of empire but the  
 name,  
 Or saw it in the looks of trembling  
 slaves;  
 And all they felt of royalty was care.  
 But I will see, and know it of myself;

Youth, Wealth and Greatness court me  
to be blest,  
And Pow'r and Pleasure draw with  
equal force  
And sweet attraction; both I will embrace  
In quick succession; this is Pleasure's  
day;  
Ambition will have time to reign here-  
after;  
It is the proper appetite of age.  
The lust of pow'r shall lord it uncon-  
troll'd,  
When all the gen'rous feelings grow  
obtuse,  
And stern Dominion holds, with rigid  
hand,  
His iron reign, and sits and sways alone.  
But youth is Pleasure's hour!

## FIRST COURTIER.

Perish the slave  
Who, with official counsel would oppose  
The king's desire, whose slightest wish  
is law!

## BELSHAZZAR.

Now strike the loud-ton'd lyre and softer  
lute;  
Let me have music, with the nobler aid  
Of poesy. Where are those cunning  
men  
Who boast, by chosen sounds, and  
measur'd sweetness,  
To set the busy spirits in a flame,  
And cool them at their will? who know  
the art  
To call the hidden powers of numbers  
forth,  
And make that pliant instrument, the  
mind,  
Yield to the pow'rful sympathy of sound,  
Obedient to the master's artful hand,  
Such magic is in song! Then give me  
song;  
Yet not at first such soul-dissolving  
strains  
As melt the soften'd sense; but such  
bold measures  
As may inflame my spirit to despise  
Th' ambitious Persian, that presump-  
tuous boy,  
Who rashly dares e'en now invest our  
city,

And menaces th' invincible Belshazzar.

[*A grand concert of music, after which  
an ode.*]

In vain shall Persian Cyrus dare  
With great Belshazzar wage unequal  
war:

In vain Darius shall combine,  
Darius, leader of the Median line;  
While fair Euphrates' stream our walls  
protects,

And great Belshazzar's self our fate  
directs.

War and famine threat in vain,  
While this demi-god shall reign!

Let Persia's prostrate king confess his  
pow'r,

And Media's monarch dread his vengeful  
hour.

On Dura's\* ample plain behold  
Immortal Belus,† whom the nations  
own;

Sublime he stands in burnish'd gold,  
And richest offerings his bright altars  
crown.

To-night his deity we here adore,  
And due libations speak his mighty  
pow'r.

Yet Belus' self not more we own  
Than great Belshazzar on Chaldea's  
throne.

Great Belshazzar like a god,  
Rules the nations with a nod!

To great Belshazzar be the goblet  
crown'd!

Belshazzar's name the echoing roofs re-  
bound!

\* *Daniel, chap. iii.*

† *See a very fine description of the  
temple of this idol.*

*The tow'ring fane  
Of Bel, Chaldean Jove, surpassing far  
That Doric temple, which the Elean  
chiefs*

*Rais'd to their thunderer from the  
spoils of war,*

*Or that Ionic, where th' Ephesian  
bow'd*

*To Dian, queen of heaven. Eight  
towers arise,*

*Each above each, immeasurable height,  
A monument at once of eastern pride,  
And slavish superstition, etc.*

*Judah Restored, b. i.*



## BELSHAZZAR.

Enough! the kindling rapture fires my  
brain,  
And my heart dances to the flattering  
sounds,  
I feel myself a god! Why not a god!  
What were the deities our fathers wor-  
ship'd?  
What was great Nimrod, our imperial  
founder?  
What greater Belus, to whose pow'r  
divine  
We raise to-night the banquet and the  
song  
But youthful heroes, mortal, like myself,  
Who, by their daring earn'd divinity?  
They were but men: nay some were  
less than men,  
Though now rever'd as gods. What was  
Anubis,  
Whom Egypt's sapient sons adore? A  
dog!  
And shall not I, young, valiant, and a  
king,  
Dare more? do more? exceed the bold-  
est flights  
Of my progenitors?—Fill me more wine,  
To cherish and exalt the young idea.  
(*he drinks.*)  
Ne'er did Olympian Jupiter himself  
Quaff such immortal draughts.

## FIRST COURTIER.

What could that Canaan,  
That heaven in hope, that nothing in  
possession,  
That air-built bliss of the deluded Jews,  
That promis'd land of milk and flowing  
honey,  
What could that fancy'd Paradise be-  
stow  
To match these generous juices?

## BELSHAZZAR.

Hold—enough!  
Thou hast rous'd a thought. By Heav'n  
I will enjoy it;  
A glorious thought! which will exalt to  
rapture  
The pleasure of the banquet, and bestow  
A yet untasted relish of delight.

## FIRST COURTIER.

What means the king?

## BELSHAZZAR.

The Jews! said'st thou the Jews!

## FIRST COURTIER.

I spoke of that undone, that outcast  
people,  
Those tributary creatures of thy pow'r,  
The captives of thy will, whose very  
breath  
Hangs on the sovereign pleasure of the  
king.

## BELSHAZZAR.

When that abandoned race was hither  
brought,  
Were not the choicest treasures of their  
temple,  
(Devoted to their God, and held most  
precious)  
Among the spoils which grac'd Nebas-  
sar's\* triumphs,  
And lodg'd in Babylon?

## FIRST COURTIER.

O king! they were.

## SECOND COURTIER.

The Jews, with superstitious awe, behold  
These sacred symbols of their ancient  
faith:  
Nor has captivity abated aught  
The rev'rend love they bear these holy  
reliques.  
Though we deride their law, and scorn  
their persons,  
Yet never have we yet to human use  
Devoted these rich vessels set apart  
To sacred purposes.

\*The name of Nebuchadnezzar not  
being reducible to verse, I have adopted  
that of Nebassar, on the authority of  
the ingenious and learned Author of  
"Judah Restored."



BELSHAZZAR.

I joy to hear it!  
Go—fetch them hither. They shall grace  
our banquet.  
Does no one stir? Belshazzar disobey'd?  
And yet you live? Whence comes this  
strange reluctance?  
This new-born rev'rence for the helpless  
Jews?  
This fear to injure those who can't re-  
venge it?  
Send to the sacred treasury in haste,  
Let all be hither brought;—who answers  
dies.

[*They go out.*]

The mantling wine a higher joy will  
yield,  
Pour'd from the precious flaggons which  
adorn'd  
Their far-fam'd temple, now in ashes  
laid.  
Oh! 'twill exalt the pleasure into trans-  
port,  
To gall those whining, praying Israelites!  
I laugh to think what wild dismay will  
seize them  
When they shall learn the use that has  
been made  
Of all their holy trumpery!

[*The vessels are brought in.*]

SECOND COURTIER.

It comes;  
A goodly show! how bright with gold  
and gems!  
Far fitter for a youthful monarch's board  
Than the cold shrine of an unheeding  
God.

BELSHAZZAR.

Fill me that massy goblet to the brim.  
Now, Abraham! let thy wretched race  
expect  
The fable of their faith to be fulfill'd;  
Their second temple and their promis'd  
King!  
Now will they see the God they vainly  
serve  
Is impotent to help; for had He pow'r  
To hear and grant their pray'r, He  
would prevent  
This profanation.

[*As the king is going to drink, thunder  
is heard: he starts from the throne,  
spies a hand, which writes on the wall  
these words, MENE, MENE, TEKEL,  
UPHARSIN. He lets fall the goblet, and  
stands in an attitude of speechless  
horror. All start and seem terrified.*]

FIRST COURTIER [*after a long pause*].

Oh, transcendent horror!

SECOND COURTIER.

What may this mean? The king is  
greatly mov'd!

THIRD COURTIER.

Nor is it strange—who unappall'd can  
view it?  
Those sacred cups! I doubt we've gone  
too far!

FIRST COURTIER.

Observe the fear-struck king! his start-  
ing eyes  
Roll horribly. Thrice he essay'd to  
speak,  
And thrice his tongue refus'd.

BELSHAZZAR [*in a low, trembling voice*].

Ye mystic words!  
Thou semblance of an hand! illusive  
forms!  
Ye wild, fantastic images, what are ye?  
Dread shadows, speak! Explain your  
dark intent!  
Ye will not answer me—Alas! I feel  
I am a mortal now—My failing limbs  
Refuse to bear me up. I am no god!  
Gods do not tremble thus—Support me,  
hold me:  
These loosen'd joints, these knees which  
smite each other,  
Betray I'm but a man—a weak one,  
too!

FIRST COURTIER.

In truth, 'tis passing strange, and full  
of horror!

BELSHAZZAR.

Send for the learn'd magicians, every  
sage  
Who deals in wizard spells and magic  
charms.

[*Some go out.*]

FIRST COURTIER.

How fares my lord the king?

BELSHAZZAR.

Am I a king?  
What pow'r have I? Ye lying slaves,  
I am not.  
Oh, soul-distracting sight! but is it  
real?  
Perhaps 'tis fancy all, or the wild dream  
Of mad distemperature, the fumes of  
wine!  
I'll look on it no more!—So—now I'm  
well!  
I am a king again, and know not fear.  
And yet my eyes will seek that fatal  
spot,  
And fondly dwell upon the sight that  
blasts them!  
Again, 'tis there! it is not fancy's work,  
I see it still! 'tis written on the wall!  
I see the writing, but the viewless writer,  
Who! what is he! Oh, horror! horror!  
horror!  
It cannot be the God of these poor  
Jews;  
For what is He, that He can thus afflict?

SECOND COURTIER.

Let not my lord the king be thus dis-  
may'd.

THIRD COURTIER.

Let not a phantom, an illusive shade  
Disturb the peace of him who rules the  
world.

BELSHAZZAR.

No more, ye wretched sycophants! no  
more!  
The sweetest note which flatt'ry now  
can strike,  
Harsh and discordant grates upon my  
soul.

Talk not of pow'r to one so full of fear,  
So weak, so impotent! Look on that  
wall;

If thou would'st soothe my soul explain  
the writing,

And thou shalt be my oracle, my God!  
O tell me whence it came, and what it  
means,

And I'll believe I am again a king!  
Friends! princes! ease my troubled  
breast, and say

What do the mystic characters portend?

FIRST COURTIER.

'Tis not in us, O king, to ease thy  
spirit;

We are not skill'd in those mysterious  
arts

Which wait the midnight studies of the  
sage:

But of the deep diviners thou shalt  
learn.

The wise astrologers, the sage magi-  
cians,

Who, of events unborn, take secret note,  
And hold deep commerce with the un-  
seen world.

[*Enter astrologers, magicians, etc.*]

BELSHAZZAR.

Approach, ye sages, 'tis the king com-  
mands.

[*They kneel.*]

ASTROLOGERS.

Hail, mighty king of Babylon!

BELSHAZZAR.

Nay, rise:  
I do not need your homage, but your  
help;

The world may worship, you must coun-  
sel me.

He who declares the secret of the king,  
No common honours shall await his  
skill;

Our empire shall be tax'd for his reward,  
And he himself shall name the gift he  
wishes.

A splendid scarlet robe shall grace his  
limbs,

His neck a princely chain of gold adorn:

Meet honours for such wisdom: He  
shall rule  
The third in rank throughout our Baby-  
lon.

SECOND ASTROLOGER.

Such recompense becomes Belshazzar's  
bounty;  
Let the king speak the secret of his  
soul;  
Which heard, his humble creatures shall  
unfold.

BELSHAZZAR [*points to the wall*].

Be't so—look there—behold those char-  
acters!  
Nay, do not start, for I will know their  
meaning!  
Ha! answer; speak, or instant death  
awaits you!  
What, dumb! all dumb! where is your  
boasted skill?

[*They confer together.*]

Keep them asunder—no confederacy—  
No secret plots to make your tales  
agree,  
Speak, slaves, and dare to let me know  
the worst!

[*They kneel.*]

FIRST ASTROLOGER.

O, let the king forgive his faithful serv-  
ants!

SECOND ASTROLOGER.

O mitigate our threatened doom of  
death;  
If we declare, with mingled grief and  
shame,  
We cannot tell the secret of the king,  
Nor what these mystic characters por-  
tent!

BELSHAZZAR.

Off with their heads! Ye shall not live  
an hour!  
Curse on your shallow arts, your lying  
science!

'Tis thus you practice on the credulous  
world,  
Who think you wise because themselves  
are weak!  
But, miscreants, ye shall die! the pow'r  
to punish  
Is all that I have left me of a king.

FIRST COURTIER.

Great sire, suspend their punishment  
awhile;  
Behold Nitocris comes, thy royal  
mother!

[*Enter Queen.*]

QUEEN.

O my misguided son!  
Well may'st thou wonder to behold me  
here:  
For I have ever shunn'd this scene of  
riot,  
Where wild intemperance and dishon-  
our'd mirth  
Hold festival impure. Yet, O Belshaz-  
zar!  
I could not hear the wonders which  
befel,  
And leave thee to the workings of  
despair:  
For, spite of all the anguish of my soul  
At thy offences, I'm thy mother still!  
Against the solemn purpose I had form'd  
Never to mix in this unhallow'd crowd,  
The wondrous story of the mystic writ-  
ing,  
Of strange and awful import, brings me  
here;  
If hap'ly I may show some likely means  
To fathom this dark mystery.

BELSHAZZAR.

Speak, O queen!  
My list'ning soul shall hang upon thy  
words,  
And prompt obedience follow them!

QUEEN.

Then hear me.  
Among thy captive tribes which hither  
came  
To grace Nebassar's triumph, there was  
brought

A youth nam'd Daniel, favour'd by high  
Heav'n

With pow'r to look into the secret page  
Of dim Futurity's mysterious volume.  
The spirit of the holy gods is in him:  
No vision so obscure, so deeply hid,  
No sentence so perplex'd but he can  
solve it:

He can unfold the dark decrees of fate,  
Can trace each crooked labyrinth of  
thought,

Each winding maze of doubt, and make  
it clear

And palpable to sense. He twice ex-  
plain'd

The monarch's mystic dreams. The holy  
seer

Saw, with prophetic spirit, what befel  
The king long after. For his wond'rous  
skill

He was rewarded, honour'd, and  
caress'd,

And with the rulers of Chaldea rank'd:  
Though now, alas! thrown by, his serv-  
ices

Forgotten or neglected.

BELSHAZZAR.

Send with speed

A message to command the holy man  
To meet us on the instant.

NITOCRIS.

I already

Have sent to ask his presence at the  
palace,

And lo! in happy season see he comes.

[*Enter Daniel.*]

BELSHAZZAR.

Welcome, thrice venerable sage! ap-  
proach.

Art thou that Daniel whom my great  
forefather

Brought hither with the captive tribes  
of Judah?

DANIEL.

I am, O king!

BELSHAZZAR.

Then, pardon, holy prophet;  
Nor let a just resentment of thy wrongs,

And long neglected merit, shut thy heart  
Against a king's request, a suppliant  
king!

DANIEL.

The God I worship teaches to forgive.

BELSHAZZAR.

Then let thy words bring comfort to  
my soul.

I've heard the spirit of the gods is in  
thee;

That thou can'st look into the fates of  
men,

With prescience more than human!

DANIEL.

Hold, O king!

Wisdom is from above; 'tis God's own  
gift,

I of myself am nothing; but from Him  
The little knowledge I possess, I hold:

To Him be all the glory!

BELSHAZZAR.

Then, O Daniel!

If thou indeed dost boast that wond'rous  
gift,

That faculty divine, look there, and tell  
me!

O say, what mean those mystic charac-  
ters?

Remove this load of terror from my  
soul,

And honours, such as kings can give,  
await thee.

Thou shalt be great beyond thy soul's  
ambition,

And rich above thy wildest dream of  
wealth:

Clad in the scarlet robe our nobles  
wear,

And grac'd with princely ensigns thou  
shalt stand

Near our own throne, and third within  
our empire.

DANIEL.

O mighty king, thy gifts with thee re-  
main

And let thy high rewards on others  
fall.

The princely ensign, nor the scarlet robe,

Nor yet to be the third within thy realm,  
 Can touch the soul of Daniel. Honour, fame,  
 All that the world calls great, thy crown itself,  
 Could never satisfy the vast ambition  
 Of an immortal spirit; I aspire  
 Beyond thy pow'r of giving; my high hopes  
 Reach also to a crown—but 'tis a crown  
 Unfading and eternal.

FIRST COURTIER.

Wond'rous man!  
 Our priests teach no such notions.

DANIEL.

Yet, O king!  
 Though all unmov'd by grandeur or by gift,  
 I will unfold the high decree of Heaven,  
 And straight declare the mystery.

BELSHAZZAR,

Speak, O prophet!

DANIEL.

Prepare to hear what kings have seldom heard;  
 Prepare to hear what courtiers seldom tell,  
 Prepare to hear the Truth. The mighty God,  
 Who rules the sceptres and the hearts of kings,  
 Gave thy renown'd forefather\* here to reign,  
 With such extent of empire, weight of pow'r,  
 And greatness of dominion, the wide earth  
 Trembled beneath the terror of his name,  
 And kingdoms stood or fell as he decreed.  
 Oh! dangerous pinnacle of pow'r supreme!  
 Who can stand safe upon its treach'rous top,  
 Behold the gazing prostrate world below,

\* *Nebuchadnezzar.*

Whom depth and distance into pigmies shrink,  
 And not grow giddy! Babylon's great king  
 Forgot he was a man, a helpless man,  
 Subject to pain, and sin, and death,  
 like others!  
 But who shall fight against Omnipotence?  
 Or who hath hardened his obdurate heart  
 Against the Majesty of Heav'n, and prosper'd?  
 The God he hath insulted was aveng'd;  
 From empire, from the joys of social life,  
 He drove him forth; extinguish'd reason's lamp;  
 Quench'd that bright spark of deity within;  
 Compell'd him with the forest brutes to roam  
 For scanty pasture; and the mountain dews  
 Fell, cold and wet, on his defenseless head,  
 Till he confess'd,—Let men, let monarchs hear!  
 Till he confess'd, PRIDE WAS NOT MADE  
 FOR MAN.

NITOCRIS.

O awful instance of divine displeasure!

BELSHAZZAR.

Proceed! my soul is wrapt in fix'd attention!

DANIEL.

O king! thy grandsire not in vain had sinn'd,  
 If, from his error thou hadst learnt the truth.  
 The story of his fall thou oft has heard,  
 But has it taught thee wisdom? Thou, like him,  
 Hast been elate with pow'r, and mad with pride,  
 Like him, thou hast defy'd the living God.  
 Nay, to bold thoughts hast added deeds more bold.  
 Thou hast outwrought the pattern he bequeath'd thee,



And quite outgone example; hast profan'd

With impious hand, the vessels of the temple:

Those vessels sanctify'd to holiest use,  
Thou hast polluted with unhallow'd lips,  
And made the instruments of foul debauch,

Thou hast ador'd the gods of wood and stone,

Vile, senseless deities, the work of hands:

But HE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,

In whom exists thy life, thy soul, thy breath,

On whom thy being hangs, thou hast deny'd.

FIRST COURTIER [*aside to the others*].

With what an holy boldness he reproves him!

SECOND COURTIER.

Such is the fearless confidence of virtue.  
And such the righteous courage those maintain

Who plead the cause of truth. The smallest word

He utters had been death to half the court.

BELSHAZZAR.

Now let the mystic writing be explain'd  
Thrice venerable sage!

DANIEL.

O mighty king!

Hear then its awful import: *Heav'n has number'd*

*Thy days of royalty, and soon will end them.*

*Our God has weigh'd thee in the even balance*

*Of His own holy law, and finds thee wanting:*

*And last, thy kingdom shall be wrested from thee.*

*And know, the Mede and Persian shall possess it.*

BELSHAZZAR [*starts up*].

Prophet, when shall this be?

DANIEL.

In God's own time;  
Here my commission ends; I may not utter

More than thou'st heard; but oh! remember king!

Thy days are number'd: hear, repent and live.

BELSHAZZAR.

Say, prophet, what can penitence avail  
If Heaven's decrees are immutably fix'd?  
Can pray'r avert our fate?

DANIEL.

They change our hearts,  
And thus dispose Omnipotence to mercy.  
'Tis man that alters; God is still the same.

*Conditional* are all Heav'n's covenants:  
And when th' uplifted thunder is withheld,

'Tis pray'r that deprecates th' impending bolt.

Good Hezekiah's\* days were numbered, too;

But penitence and faith were mighty pleas:

At Mercy's throne they never plead in vain.

[*He is going.*]

BELSHAZZAR.

Stay, prophet, and receive thy promis'd gift;

The scarlet robe and princely chain are thine

And let my herald publish through the land

That Daniel stands, in dignity and pow'r,  
The third in Babylon. These just rewards

Thou well may'st claim, though sad thy prophecy!

\* II Chron. chap. xxxiii. Isaiah, chap. xxxviii.



## QUEEN.

Be not deceiv'd, my son! nor let thy  
soul  
Snatch an uncertain moment's treach'rous  
rest,  
On the dread brink of that tremendous  
gulf  
Which yawns beneath thee.

## DANIEL.

O unhappy king,  
Know what *must* happen once *may* hap-  
pen soon.  
Remember that 'tis terrible to meet  
Great evils unprepar'd! and, O Belshaz-  
zar!  
In the wild moment of dismay and  
death,  
Remember thou wast warn'd! and, O  
remember,  
Warnings despis'd are condemnations  
then.

[*Exeunt Daniel and Queen.*]

## BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis well—my soul shakes off its load  
of care:  
'Tis only the obscure is terrible.  
Imagination frames events unknown,  
In wild fantastic shapes of hideous ruin,  
And what it fears creates!—I know the  
worst;  
And awful is that worst as fear could  
feign:  
But distant are the ills I have to dread!  
What is remote may be uncertain, too!—  
Ha! princes! hope breaks in!—This may  
not be.

## FIRST COURTIER.

Perhaps this Daniel is in league with  
Persia;  
And brib'd by Cyrus to report these  
horrors,  
To weaken and impede the mighty plans  
Of thy imperial mind.

## BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis very like.

## SECOND COURTIER.

Return we to the banquet.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Dare we venture?

## THIRD COURTIER.

Let not this dreaming seer disturb the  
king.  
Against the pow'r of Cyrus and the  
Mede  
Is Babylon secure. Her brazen gates  
Mock all attempts to force them. Proud  
Euphrates,  
A wat'ry bulwark, guards our ample  
city  
From all assailants. And within the  
walls  
Of this stupendous capital are lodg'd  
Such vast provisions, such exhaustless  
stores,  
As a twice ten years' siege could never  
waste.

BELSHAZZAR [*embraces him*].

My better genius! Safe in such resources,  
I mock the prophet.—Turn me to the  
banquet!

[*As they are going to resume their  
places at the banquet, a dreadful up-  
roar is heard, tumultuous cries, and  
warlike sounds. All stand terrified.  
Enter soldiers with their swords  
drawn and wounded.*]

## SOLDIER.

Oh, helpless Babylon! Oh, wretched  
king!  
Chaldea is no more, the Mede has con-  
quer'd!  
The victor Cyrus, like a mighty torrent  
Comes rushing on, and marks his way  
with ruin!  
Destruction is at hand; escape or perish.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Impossible! Villain and slave thou ly'st!  
Euphrates and the brazen gates secure  
us.  
While those remain, Belshazzar laughs  
at danger.

SOLDIER.

Euphrates is diverted from its course;  
The brazen gates are burst, the city's  
taken;  
Thyself a pris'ner, and thy empire lost.

BELSHAZZAR.

Oh, prophet! I remember thee, indeed!

*[He runs out. They follow in the  
utmost confusion.]*

*[Enter several Jews, Medes, and  
Babylonians.]*

FIRST JEW.

He comes, he comes! the long-predicted  
prince,  
Cyrus, the destin'd instrument of  
Heaven,  
To free our captive nation, and restore  
JEHOVAH'S temple. Carnage marks his  
way,  
And Conquest sits upon his plume-  
crown'd helm.

SECOND JEW.

What noise is that?

FIRST JEW.

Hark! 'tis Belshazzar's voice!

BELSHAZZAR *[without]*.

O soldier, spare my life, and aid my  
flight!  
Such treasures shall reward the gentle  
deed  
As Persia never saw. I'll be thy slave;  
I'll yield my crown to Cyrus; I'll adore  
His gods and thine—I'll kneel and kiss  
thy feet,  
And worship thee.—It is not much I  
ask—  
I'll live in bondage, beggary and pain,  
Do thou but let me live.

SOLDIER.

Die, tyrant, die!

BELSHAZZAR.

O Daniel! Daniel! Daniel!

*[Enter Soldier.]*

SOLDIER.

Belshazzar's dead!  
The wretched king breathed out his  
furious soul  
In that tremendous groan.

FIRST JEW.

Belshazzar's dead!  
Then, Judah, art thou free! The tyrant's  
fallen!  
Jerusalem, Jerusalem is free!

PART III.

*[Enter Daniel and Jews.]*

DANIEL.

Bel boweth down,\* and haughty Nebo  
stoops!  
The idols fall; the god and worshiper  
Together fall; together they bow down!  
Each other, or themselves they cannot  
save.  
O, Babylon where is thy refuge now?  
Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, meant  
to save,  
Pervert thee, and thy blessing is thy  
bane!  
Where are thy brutish deities, Chaldea?  
Where are thy gods of gold?—Oh, Lord  
of life!  
Thou very God! so fall thy foes before  
thee!

FIRST JEW.

So fell beneath the terrors of Thy name  
The idol Chemosh, Moab's empty trust;  
So Ammonitish Moloch sunk before  
Thee;  
So fell Philistine Dagon: so shall fall,  
To time's remotest period, all thy foes,  
Triumphant Lord of Hosts!

\* *Isaiah, chap. xlv.*

## DANIEL.

How chang'd our fate!  
 Not for myself, O Judah! but for thee  
 I shed these tears of joy. For I no  
 more  
 Must view the cedars which adorn the  
 brow  
 Of Syrian Lebanon; no more shall see  
 Thy pleasant stream, O Jordan! nor the  
 flocks  
 Which whiten all the mountains of  
 Judea;  
 No more these eyes delighted shall re-  
 view  
 Or Carmel's heights, or Sharon's flow'ry  
 vales.  
 I must remain in Babylon! So Heav'n,  
 To whose awards I bow me, has decreed.  
 I ne'er shall see thee, Salem! I am old;  
 And few and toilsome are my days to  
 come.  
 But we shall meet in those celestial  
 climes,  
 Compar'd with which created glories  
 sink;  
 Where sinners shall have pow'r to harm  
 no more,  
 And martyr'd Virtue rests her weary  
 head.  
 Though ere my day of promis'd grace  
 shall come,  
 I shall be tried by perils strange and  
 new;  
 Nor shall I taste of death, so have I  
 learn'd,  
 Till I have seen the captive tribes re-  
 stor'd.

## FIRST JEW.

And shall we view, once more, thy  
 hallow'd towers,  
 Imperial Salem?

## DANIEL.

Yes, my youthful friends!  
 You shall behold the second temple  
 rise,\*  
 With grateful ecstasy; but we, your  
 sires,  
 Now bent with hoary age; we, whose  
 charm'd eyes

\*Ezra, chap. i.

Beheld the matchless glories of the first,  
 Should weep, rememb'ring that we once  
 had seen  
 That model of perfection!

## SECOND JEW.

Never more  
 Shall such a wondrous structure grace  
 the earth!

## DANIEL.

Well have you borne affliction, men of  
 Judah!  
 Well have sustain'd your portion of dis-  
 tress:  
 And, unrepining, drank the bitter dregs  
 Of adverse fortune! Happier days await  
 you.  
 O guard against the perils of success!  
 Prosperity dissolves the yielding soul,  
 And the bright sun of shining fortune  
 melts  
 The firmest virtue down. Beware, my  
 friends,  
 Be greatly cautious of prosperity!  
 Defend your sliding hearts; and, tremb-  
 ling, think  
 How those, who buffeted Affliction's  
 waves  
 With vig'rous virtue, sunk in Pleasure's  
 calm.  
 He,\* who of special grace had been  
 allow'd  
 To rear the hallow'd fane to Israel's  
 God,  
 By wealth corrupted, and by ease de-  
 bauch'd,  
 Forsook the God to whom he rais'd the  
 fane;  
 And, sunk in sensual sloth, consum'd his  
 days  
 In vile idolatrous rites.—Nor think, my  
 sons,  
 That virtue in sequester'd *solitude*  
 Is always found. Within the inmost  
 soul  
 The hidden tempter lurks; nor less be-  
 trays  
 In the still seeming safety of retreat,  
 Than where the world her snares en-  
 tangling spreads,

\*Solomon.

More visible to sense. Guard every  
thought:

Who thinks himself secure is half un-  
done;

For Sin, unwatch'd, may reach the sanc-  
tuary:

'Tis not the place preserves us. Right-  
eous Lot

Stem'd the strong current of Corruption's  
tide,

E'en in polluted Sodom; safe he liv'd,  
While circumspective Virtue's watchful  
eye

Was anxiously awake: but in the shade,  
Far from the obvious perils which  
alarm

With palpable temptation, secret sin  
Ensnares his soul; he trusted in himself;  
Security betray'd him, and he fell.

#### SECOND JEW.

Thy prudent counsels in our hearts shall  
live,

As if a pen of adamant had grav'd  
them.

#### FIRST JEW.

The dawn approaches; let us part, my  
friend,

Secure of peace, since tyranny is fallen.

#### DANIEL.

So perish all thine enemies, O Lord;  
So mighty God, shall perish all who  
seek

Corrupted pleasures in the turbid waves  
Of life's polluted stream, and madly quit  
The living fountain of perennial grace!

HANNAH MORE.  
(1745-1833.)



## THE JEWISH CAPTIVES





## THE JEWISH CAPTIVES

### ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Private Garden in Babylon.*

ELI.

My gentle Eva, tune thy harp, and sing  
Till these blind eyes see old Judea's  
hills,  
And feel the captive's comfort of a tear.

EVA.

Oh! father, in these strings still sleeps  
a spell  
To charm away each sorrow from thy  
soul,  
But my sad touch can wake no music  
now;  
When circling hawks cast shadows on  
its nest,  
The bird to Heav'n trills not its morn-  
ing joy.

ELI.

I love to hear the songs of thy young  
life;  
More sad my gloom, more deep my soli-  
tude,  
Without thy harp and lip to give me  
cheer.

EVA.

'Tis soul, and not the sound, melts grief  
away;  
Song loves liberty as the birds love light,  
And when the cage is still the grove  
bursts forth.  
Just as the heart is bound the lip is cold.  
But, father, on yon willow let me hang  
My silent harp, and tell to thee my  
dream,  
And when my cloud has pass'd my song  
may flow.

ELI.

My Eva, take my hand, and lead me  
where  
Oft with thy mother I have stood and  
gazed;  
Her image there, she whispers through  
my gloom.

[*Eva guides ELI to the willow, against  
which she places her harp, when  
they sit under the shade on a  
grassy bank.*]

EVA.

Father, would thou couldst see yon  
golden sky  
Where paints the sun his crimson on  
the clouds;  
The light and shadow chasing o'er the  
grass;  
These oaks that join their patriarchal  
limbs  
Across yon stream, bright-flashing when  
'tis seen,  
Yet murmuring music though its way  
be hid,  
And teaching us, if dark our path, to  
sing!

ELI.

No light for these poor eyes shut up in  
gloom,  
But morn and noon and night to me  
the same.  
When blindness came, at first my heart  
grew hard;  
Oh! now within a sun, no more to set,  
Outshining him who fills the earth and  
sky.  
Quick, Eva, tell thy dream!

EVA.

My mother's voice  
Comes back like angel-whispers in the  
eve,  
As she once told the story of thy home  
That smiled 'mid bloom above the temple  
hill.  
My memory hears around Jerusalem  
The tramp of men, the thunder-bursting  
yells,  
And blows upon the gates—along the  
streets  
The clang of hoofs and the wild noise  
of war,  
While flames I see that from the temple  
roll,  
And glare o'er heav'n, as when my  
mother spoke.  
I feel again the pain of your long  
march,  
To reach a captive's place where false  
gods rule.  
Father, in dreams last night I saw your  
dear  
Old home wrapp'd round with fire, and  
forth I rose,  
It seem'd, out from the flames, when,  
as I flew,  
Some monster clasp'd me shrieking  
round my waist  
And bore me high o'er clouds, until we  
dropp'd  
Within a palace-hall of Babylon.

ELI.

My Eva, cease this tale which pains  
my ear;  
Some midnight magic has call'd forth  
bad dreams,  
Or fever in thy brain wakes shapes of  
fire;  
Or evil angels have lurk'd o'er thy  
couch.  
Not from the Source of Good wild  
phantoms come.

EVA.

Father, this dream leaves on my breast  
a weight  
Like some cold stone, while in my head  
whirls fire.

*Enter ABNER and ONO.*

ELI.

Ha! lads, I know your steps, and my  
old ear  
Grows quick to hear how goes the city's  
siege.

ABNER.

Thy prophets, father, have deceived us  
Jews  
With words as false and frail as painted  
mists;  
Thy priests must now the light from  
Heav'n bring back  
By death-drops from the heart of some  
poor lamb  
Whose pangs should blast, not bless its  
murderers.

ELI.

My son, speak not in scorn of things  
now hid  
Behind the cloud that veils thy Maker's  
plans!

ABNER.

Jehovah sleeps while Baal crowns his  
sons;  
They sit in purple and we weep in dust.

ONO.

The captive's wail shall turn to triumph  
song.  
With Him who rules a cycle is a day;  
We wait, or trust, or strike as He may  
say.

ABNER.

The two-leaved gates defy the Persian's  
blows:  
Her walls like mountains stand round  
Babylon.  
Here fields and gardens bloom, and  
Plenty smiles  
With stores piled up to Heav'n, while  
gaunt without  
The troops of Cyrus stalk like skeletons,  
And boys and women mock them from  
the towers.  
Their very banners hang with sickly  
droop

As if they shrank away from vigorous winds.

Factions divide, the hungry nations jar;  
And men thy prophets said would break  
our chains

Will see their armies soon like clouds  
dissolve.

ONO.

Cousin, despair and youth should never  
wed,

More than the frost should marry with  
the fire;

Let Faith and Hope smile angels on  
our path,

And they will nerve our hearts for vic-  
tory.

ELI.

Yes! through my gloom a cloud of  
glory gleams

Bright o'er thy rebuilt towers, Jerusalem!  
Belshazzar's gorgeous piles shall shake  
and fall!

O'er them shall darkness brood, and  
hoot the owl,

And the lean fox lone o'er their ruins  
look,

While Zion's hill stands in eternal light!

[Here EVA, who has retired behind  
the trees, takes her harp and  
sings.]

EVA.

Brother, trust! 'tis God hath spoken!  
Israel soon will cease to roam!

Brother, trust! each battle-token  
Soon will show us near our home!

God has call'd—the nations hearken;  
Round our walls their banners fly;  
Over earth their armies darken;  
Send their shouts into the sky.

Hark! on stones a hoof is ringing!  
Arms on arms! I hear the clash!  
Up to Heav'n the flames are springing!  
Wild o'er Babylon their flash!

There I see a monarch lying!  
Blazes round a banquet's light!  
Blood is on him, gasping, dying—  
Torn his crown and gone his might!

One king lies there grim and gory,  
Crown'd his victor I behold!  
Over Zion bursts new glory!  
Stands her temple as of old!

SCENE II.—*A room in the house of ELI  
overlooking a garden.*

ONO.

Captivity makes gloom, and tries our  
hearts;

Yet morn shall come from night with  
sun and song.

ABNER.

But ere the dawn my youth in me is  
dead:—

My life a void, and yet an agony.

I hate myself, and oft my Maker hate,

And feel that I would hurl Him from  
His throne.

'Twas He, not I, who made me thus for  
pain.

Who forges chains, and wakes the  
pangs of war,

And stains with blood a world He  
strews with graves,

Forcing from man this universal wail?

I, a mortal, would relieve the woe,

While He who can, you say, nor hears,  
nor helps.

ONO.

Thy youth is aged, thy hair is early  
grey

With bitterness, which, not thy years,  
makes old.

What robs the eye of fire, and blood of  
joy

With nature wars—of evil root ill fruit.

ABNER.

Ono, we have enough to craze our souls.  
See on the throne of Babylon a fool,

Yet flashing in his splendour like a god,  
Whose nod can make the streets run

with our blood,  
And hang a dangling Jew from every  
tree,

Then cut us down, and turn us o'er to  
dogs!

Yes! Eli is a slave—Belshazzar, king;  
Virtue in chains and tyranny in gold.

A life like ours can't find a grave too  
soon.

ONO.

Belshazzar is a captive to his lusts,  
And Eli monarch by his goodness  
crown'd,  
In wisdom rich and throned in hearts  
he loves.

ABNER.

I'm tired of this old tale, and life's dull  
pain;  
Weary with heart-beats and the load I  
bear.  
Along our streets the boys shout out,  
"A Jew!"  
The simpering girl will smirk and whis-  
per, "Jew!"  
The beggar sneering cries, "A Jew!  
A Jew!"  
The slave will mutter as he mocks us,  
"Jew!"  
Could God thus curse his sons, and bless  
their foes?  
His throne seems void, His universe a  
blank.

ONO.

Thy thoughts in words but make the  
pang more sharp;  
The stem that feels the knife gives  
brightest bloom,  
Fields torn with ploughs wave with the  
richest gold,  
And loudest tempests leave the sweet-  
est calm.

ABNER.

Ono, mere words; the thorn will pierce  
thee, too;  
There is in each some spot most sensi-  
tive  
Which will resent the steel. Cut *other*  
flesh,  
The man is still; touch *that*, and he  
will smite.

ONO.

There is from Heaven a help to those  
who trust.

ABNER [*pointing through a window to*  
*EVA leading ELI through the gar-*  
*den*].

Behold a sight that should draw tears  
from rocks.

And ask if it will bring one drop from  
Heaven?

See Innocence lead Age along yon walk!  
'Tis Beauty helping Wisdom on in love.  
'Think of that angel in Belshazzar's  
arms!

Ha! thou dost start! the point is in  
*thine* heart;

The pallor of thy cheek shows me thy  
faith.

ONO.

Jehovah, save her from the monster's  
clasp!

Ne'er let him blast the bloom of my  
sweet flower!

ABNER.

Pray not, but strike—strike to the ty-  
rant's heart;

Thy sword will save her better than thy  
trust.

ONO.

There is a time to suffer and to slay;  
When Heaven will have us smite it  
shows the way.

*Enter GORGAS and ATYS, Officers of*  
*BELSHAZZAR.*

ABNER.

Whence do ye come, and what your er-  
rand here?

Who hear our words by stealth must  
feel our swords.

ATYS.

Be calm, brave Jew, and hold us as  
thy friends!

We, too, have felt at last the tyrant's  
heel;

Goaded too deep, the ass himself rebels.

ABNER.

Made near by common wrongs, we wel-  
come you!

My hope revives! A cloud lifts from  
our race;

I feel the blush of shame for my despair.  
Light hence with us—with Babylon the  
gloom!

ONO.

But tell us, princes, why ye seek us  
here,  
And we will swear with you to right  
our wrongs.

GORGIAS.

Both crime and folly shake Belshazzar's  
throne;  
Within, oppression drains the empire's  
veins,  
Without, 'tis destiny has arm'd our foe.  
The gorgeous pile nods o'er the brink  
of fate,  
And needed but one touch to dash it  
down.  
Atys, recount the tyrant's last mad  
blow!  
My gasping son would choke my words  
with groans.

ATYS.

The park ye know, in which, high o'er  
our walls,  
The terraced garden mounts amid the  
clouds;  
Well, near its base of bloom, on flying  
steeds  
We chased a boar; Belshazzar led the  
way.  
In his swift flight the tusky monster  
turn'd;  
Belshazzar hurl'd his spear with girlish  
arm,  
And headlong sprawl'd on earth beneath  
his horse  
Close to the glaring boar, which rush'd  
on him,  
When, quick, Ozona's sword was in the  
beast,  
That sent its spouting blood to stain the  
king;  
And then, ye gods, the tyrant struck the  
lad,  
Who fell down dead beneath his father's  
feet!

ONO.

That blow sounds out the knell of Baby-  
lon,

Beats down her walls and shakes her  
shatter'd throne,  
The Persian crowns, and sends the Jew  
forth free  
To build again Jerusalem, our joy!

ABNER.

Princes, we will dare all to burst our  
chains!  
But tell us how that we can give you aid.

ATYS.

Cyrus, we hear, grows weary with the  
siege,  
His troops desert, his stores and hopes  
are low;  
Fame says ye have a scroll that gives  
his name,  
Foretelling, ages since, his victory;  
To him we'd bear the book, and nerve  
his heart.

*Enter ELI, led by EVA.*

ABNER.

My father see—this blind old man who  
comes!  
That book he deems the gift of Heav'n  
to us;  
Nor could a kingdom buy it from his  
grasp.

ELI.

The winds have borne strange voices to  
mine ear,  
And in their breath I scent some com-  
ing joy.

ONO.

Here, uncle, stand two princes next the  
throne,  
Who, outraged by the king, his ruin  
plan.

ELI.

Hail, blest of Heav'n! Our deliverers,  
hail!  
O'er these blind eyes hope streams pro-  
phetic light.  
But what your plans?



ONO.

Our Holy book  
They would to Cyrus bear, and show his  
name,  
And where 'tis said he'll pass the two-  
leaved gates.

ELI.

Never shall Gentile hands the Word  
profane  
If Israel linger here to die in chains!  
But ye, my children, ye shall take the  
scroll!  
Oh! Heav'n guard well the gift be-  
stow'd on me!

[ELI is led by EVA to a golden chest,  
and, unlocking it, he lifts out a  
large parchment.]

Accept the trust, and unto blood defend,  
And swear that ye will bring it to these  
hands!

Ono, swear!

ONO.

I swear!

ELI.

Abner, thou!

ABNER.

I swear!

ELI.

Can ye unbar your gates, and scale your  
walls  
To Cyrus reach?

GORGAS.

A passage deep beneath  
Our streets will lead us, devious, to the  
plain,  
And near the Persian camp, while here  
its keys—  
My family trust!

ELI.

Go, with my blessing, go!  
Jehovah guide you through the cavern'd  
earth!  
Jehovah move the Persian's royal soul!

These feet shall touch the land I may  
not see!

These ears shall hear the song on Zion's  
hill

When to the skies our temple lifts its  
head!

GORGAS.

But now, good Jew, we must pierce  
to thy heart,

To save from worse than death one  
thou dost love.

ELI.

This breast has felt the storm so fierce  
and oft

That, like a trunk scarr'd on the moun-  
tain's top,

It dreads no blast that roars to make  
it fall.

GORGAS.

Thy daughter, Jew, thy daughter should  
retire,

That we may speak to thee.

EVA.

Heav'n in my dreams  
Has show'd it me, when I, borne in  
mid-air,  
Was by a monster clasp'd—Belshazzar,  
he.

ATYS.

Too true, too true! He marks thee for  
his own!

The tiger's spring less sure than his foul  
lust,

Whose snares would lure thy beauty to  
his arms.

EVA.

Father, speak not, nor roll thine eyes  
in pain!

Nor, Abner, grasp thy sword, and glare  
so fierce!

My Ono, stand not like despair in stone!  
Now in this hour which tests my faith  
in Heav'n

I feel within the might of virtue lives  
To breathe a conquering vigour through  
my soul;

And oh! a shield so strong is over me

That its bright face will dazzle my foul  
 foe.  
 No stain shall ever mar my virgin  
 bloom,  
 But from Belshazzar I will come as  
 pure  
 As the fresh leaf of my own morning  
 rose,  
 Which knows no kiss save of the dew  
 and breeze.  
 Omnipotent the might of virtue's power;  
 A true, pure heart is an immortal flower.

SCENE III.—*A Piazza on the Hanging  
 Garden.*

BELSHAZZAR.

A whim, Atossa, call it what thou wilt,  
 Me like a bubble lures, and I do chase  
 The glittering thing, since 'tis my des-  
 tiny.

ATOSSA.

My royal insect, say, o'er what flower  
 next,  
 To sip its sweets, wilt wave thy brilliant  
 wings?  
 Soon from this world its honey suck'd,  
 the gods  
 Must make a better one; and then for  
 thee.  
 When each is stale, a brighter than the  
 old,  
 And thus for ever on.

BELSHAZZAR.

Immortal jest!

Wit, mirth, wine, women, feasts and  
 priests in turn  
 Have to my hours tied wings and painted  
 them,  
 Till they would fly like clouds to leave  
 me blank.

ATOSSA.

Thou king of kings, what phantom lures  
 thee now,  
 Since thou dost look like some sick lad  
 in love?

BELSHAZZAR.

Atossa, laugh, and I'll endure thy jests,  
 For thou art but myself in woman's  
 form;  
 Nor polish'd steel thine image gives  
 more true  
 Than thou art mirror'd in thy brother's  
 soul.

ATOSSA.

While Cyrus girdles round thy throne  
 with war,  
 Would I could lead thee off from vir-  
 gins' breasts  
 To stand with men in battle for thy  
 crown!

BELSHAZZAR.

War is the work of fools—to wear a  
 helm  
 And plume, and live shut up in brass,  
 And thirst, and starve, and stagger  
 'neath your toil,  
 Then hack and kill to pile o'er plains  
 with men  
 Whose flesh shall fatten dogs, and for  
 your pay  
 A rabble's shout, *this* glory's vaunted  
 prize  
 Which Cyrus loves, and can have for  
 himself  
 While last my stores, and walls resist  
 his blows.  
 With wine and love I still will brighten  
 life,  
 My crown esteem just for the joys it  
 brings,  
 And when these die, the bauble give my  
 foe.

ATOSSA.

A boy art thou, Belshazzar, not a king,  
 But now the secret that doth load thy  
 heart!

BELSHAZZAR.

Sister, I love, in truth at last I love:  
 The snarer snared—and more, I would  
 be loved,  
 And if not loved I'm lost, and at an end  
 This insect life, stifled by its gay  
 threads.

ATOSSA.

Nay, brother, nay! the royal whim will  
pass,  
And thou wilt lie, flower-crown'd, on  
beauty's breast,  
Or sit gay-garlanded where flows the  
wine,  
And song floats out with harp and dul-  
cimer.

BELSHAZZAR.

A rose of Sharon in my palace blooms  
More dear to me than crowns, and on  
my breast  
I'll wear my Jewish flower, or die ac-  
cursed.  
The soul was in me once to make a  
man,  
But I was born a king—*that* blasted it  
'Tis love must turn my blight to bloom,  
and fit  
Me for my diadem; or, oh! ye flowers,  
Ye trees on terraces piled into heav'n  
By my great ancestor—ye walls he  
rear'd  
O'ertopping clouds—thou watch-tower  
lone of stars—  
Ye palaces and trophied monuments,  
Built from a plunder'd world to blaze  
our fame,  
But stain'd with tears and blood, link'd  
with you all  
By fate, must I, too, fall and share  
your curse?  
Death's pulse beats in my life as oft I  
hear  
Wild shrieks drown mirth beneath my  
battlements.  
A sword waves o'er yon towers, and  
round my crown  
A serpent coils, and sins of ages flame,  
Until I seem like that last mountain-pine  
Whose shroud of fire is the whole for-  
est's blaze.

ATOSSA.

What means thy mood and tones of  
prophecy?  
This feather see, whose history I will  
tell!  
As I stood here to view the Persian  
camp

Whose arms and banners glitter'd in the  
sun,  
On a white horse rode Cyrus grandly  
forth,  
And while I gazed, a brilliant bird  
flash'd by,  
On which down from the clouds an  
eagle swoop'd,  
With beak to bear aloft the crested  
thing,  
When circling to my feet this feather  
fell.

BELSHAZZAR.

Give me the painted plume—sign of my-  
self,  
The sport of winds—to place it in my  
crown  
Above mine empire's gems, a type of  
fate!  
But hark, a hell-bird comes to croak my  
doom!

ATOSSA.

I will retire, nor hear our mother rage.

[ATOSSA *exit*.]

BELSHAZZAR.

I will not fear, but pay her with her  
own;  
This plume stuck in my crown will  
madden her.

*Enter* NITOCRIS and MADETES.

NITOCRIS.

A feather in thy cap—fit diadem  
For thee, thou king of mighty Babylon!

BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis this I wear which to my nature  
suits  
That I did suck out from those queenly  
breasts.

NITOCRIS.

Nay! from thy nurse thy folly flow'd  
to thee;  
Nor blood nor milk of mine made such  
a son.

But play no more the boy! that plume  
take off!

Put on thy helm, and grasp thy sword  
and shield!

Where harps and moonlit pipes now  
soothe thy sense

Let trumpets peal the battle-blast of  
war!

Thy robes of silk exchange for links of  
steel!

The smiles of women for fierce blows  
with men!

Thy feasts for fasts, thy shame for vic-  
tory!

BELSHAZZAR.

Cease, mother, cease!

NITOCRIS.

Arm, Belshazzar, arm!

Down from this height your leaguer'd  
city view,

Her glory circled by eternal walls!

Earth's crown is now for thee to hold  
or lose.

Where stood thine ancestor with kingly  
eye

To see arise his work, there wilt thou  
stand

To see it fall? the towers he built, wilt  
thou

Look hence on them while Persians hurl  
them down?

Say, came from me, my son, a soul like  
that?

BELSHAZZAR.

I beg thee, stop!

NITOCRIS.

And I do beg thee *fight*!

MADETES.

Low on the earth I crawl and grasp  
thy knees;

Thy faithful eunuch prays thee save thy  
crown.

BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis ye, if Cyrus wear it, are the cause.

NITOCRIS.

This is thy folly now to madness  
turned!

Give me thy diadem! Thine armour fit  
Around thy mother's form! Above her  
brow

Thy helm should wave its plume! Her  
hand will hurl

For thee amid the battle's shock thy  
spear;

And when our foe shall fly it shall be  
told

Along our streets, and thunder'd up to  
clouds,

That thine old mother saved for thee  
thy realm,

While thou, bedeck'd with flowers, and  
lull'd by lutes,

Didst on thy couches feast with concu-  
bines.

BELSHAZZAR.

Insult me not—thy king as well as son!  
I blame thee for a mother's too fond  
love.

My youth was flush'd with noble dreams  
of war,

The trumpet stirr'd my pulses into fire,  
Until I sought the field to be a king.

Thy coward love did hedge me in with  
boys,

Where Pleasure tied me with her silken  
cords,

And took the manhood from my pam-  
per'd soul;

But who has power to win will keep his  
crown;

Brave men will scorn weak kings, and  
hurl them down.

Thus those to empire born dig their  
own graves,

While enterprise takes strength from  
wave and storm,

To crush voluptuous heirs and mount  
their thrones.

I see the truth too late to shun my  
doom;

Eternal Fate mine empire sinks in  
gloom.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Camp of Cyrus before Babylon.*

CYRUS.

First, destiny I trust, and then the gods,  
And last, myself.

ABRADATES.

Forgive our doubt, O king,  
And that we tire of this dull, dragging  
siege;  
Despair looks from the faces of our  
men.

Better our armies move by thy com-  
mand,

Than troops of thine steal home like  
fugitives.

GYGES.

'Tis two years since 'mid shouts thy  
hand did give

Our banner to the winds before these  
walls.

While we are lank, flush'd Plenty smiles  
within,

And those unshaken towers laugh at  
our rams.

ABRADATES.

The clash of arms 'mid battle's breath  
of fire

And tug of death, we love—not idle  
war.

CYRUS.

True soldiers wait, or fight as gods  
decree,

Whose smile alone points on to victory.

ABRADATES.

Never since first my wheels in battle  
rush'd

Have whirl'd my steeds my chariot from  
the foe:

Yet now I'd hear the trumpet sound re-  
treat.

CYRUS.

Such blast, my friend, will never please  
thine ear.

With beauty robed, as Panthea smiles  
on thee,

So Babylon, my queen, still lures me on  
To bind the crown of Persia on her  
brow.

ABRADATES.

Fast as my steeds, whose fire is from  
the sun,

Can draw my grateful wheels, I'll go  
with thee.

CYRUS.

Despairing Cræsus, too, I tell thee now,  
So sure as thou wast pluck'd from cruel  
fire,

I'll mount yon tower whose head strikes  
on the stars,

And fling from thence my flag o'er  
Babylon.

CRÆSUS.

O king, I yield to thee, and doubt no  
more;

What Cyrus wills in war is destiny.

But give, we beg, the reasons of thy  
faith.

CYRUS.

True men have one prime object of  
their lives

Which Heaven helps on, and all below  
are steps

Like climbing stairs that circle round a  
tower

To gain its top, and give us prospect  
wide.

Up to one grand event which caps the  
whole

Mounts every step of my predestin'd  
past.

My Persian birth, the breath of liberty,  
The discipline that nerved both flesh  
and soul.

And throned as lord of all my will:

The royal splendours then of Media's  
court,

Nay! e'en my grandsire's polish'd luxury;  
 Each after-move on this chess-board of life,  
 Where Fate ranged men around me as their king,  
 But bore me on to fix my banner here.  
 My dreams in youth were flush'd with Babylon,  
 And when they troop'd like gorgeous clouds along  
 She was the sun that lit their splendours up.  
 My manhood now stands center'd in her light;  
 Take her away, my path is all a gloom,  
 My life a chaos of discordant plans;  
 With her in view, one blaze of victory!  
 As day's consenting beams meet in the sun,  
 So all my being ends in Babylon.

*Enter GORGIAS and ATYS, with ABNER and ONO, guarded by Persian soldiers.*

Say, who are these with beards and hair forlorn,  
 And hunger lean, and garments soil'd by earth?  
 In these I seem to see our way made plain.

OFFICER.

We heard, O king! beneath the ground a cry  
 Suppress'd and faint, as shook the soil with blows;  
 We seized our spades, and digg'd down to a stone,  
 Which, lifted, show'd these weak and groping men,  
 Whom dazzled by the light we led to thee.

*[Officer retires.]*

GORGIAS.

O king, is Gorgias so begrimed and vile  
 Thy royal eye cannot discern his face?

CYRUS.

Thy voice recalls thee now—I know thee well.

Thou art the prince I met in Lydia once,

Whose spear did save me from a lion's mouth.

GORGIAS.

O king, I must not say that but for me  
 The crown of Babylon could ne'er be thine.

CYRUS.

I'll tell what thou wilt not—my life thou saved,  
 And since, I've worn in token of my thanks  
 A lion on my crest with rampant paws.  
 Thou art, I trust, my friend, and not my foe.

GORGIAS.

Atys, O king, my brother's son, with me,  
 And these young Jews, here pledge thee swords and souls.

*[All kneel, and kiss the hand of CYRUS.]*

CYRUS.

Stand up, my friends! Long may I call you such;  
 Now tell what brought you here in such a plight!

GORGIAS.

I seek my vengeance for my first-born's blood—  
 My noble boy struck by the tyrant dead;  
 Atys joins with me to avenge his kin;  
 These Jews would from their country burst her chains.

CYRUS.

Thanks to the gods, your guides to bring you here!

GORGIAS.

We heard, O king, thy hopes had sunk, and soon

Thy baffled army would to Persia turn.  
 These Jews have brought that which will nerve thy soul.

Inspire thy men. and give thee Babylon.



CYRUS.

I see, good Jews, ye bear an ancient  
 scroll  
 Which seems to wake strange throbbings  
 in my breast.

ABNER.

Within our temple, 'neath a cloud of  
 light,  
 An ark of gold once held this sacred  
 book  
 Which the Jehovah wrote on Sinai's  
 side,  
 And gave to Moses that our race might  
 guard.  
 When blazed Chaldean flames about the  
 place,  
 A priest, my sire, to save this holy  
 scroll,  
 Rush'd through the fire, and caught it to  
 his breast,  
 But came out blind who brought to us  
 such light.  
 The sightless man has kept his treasure  
 hid,  
 Till now he sends us here to show thy  
 name  
 Writ down before thy birth, and for  
 this hour,  
 To gird thee on with strength to Baby-  
 lon.  
 Here read that thou shalt pass the gates  
 of brass,  
 Chaldea's treasures seize, and set us  
 free.  
 We hail thee, Cyrus, our predestin'd  
 king!

ALL.

We hail thee Lord of lords, and King  
 of kings!

[ABNER and ONO kneel before CYRUS  
 with the open scroll.]

CYRUS.

I read in Jewish characters my name,  
 And my prophetic work by Heav'n fore-  
 told;  
 A flash from destiny thus lights me on  
 To drain the river and creep 'neath the  
 walls.

I saw in dreams one standing on a hill  
 Against the sky, and circled round with  
 rays,  
 While glitter'd in his hand for me a  
 crown.  
 All things do point us on to Babylon.

SCENE II.—*A room in the palace of  
 babylon.*

EVA [alone].

I shall not fall, since o'er me is His  
 shield,  
 Who doth make pure the virgin lily's  
 bloom,  
 And the bright stars, and the sweet  
 breath of Heav'n.  
 We bruise the rose to get its scented  
 drop,  
 And out from me will trial fragrance  
 fling.  
 'Tis Battle by its blows keeps Valour  
 strong,  
 While Pleasure, flush and full, smiles  
 Virtue down,  
 And bribes the guards about her citadel.  
 In hue and shape here beauty lives,  
 here music breathes,  
 And odours charm, till I swim in such  
 dreams  
 As fancy paints in evening's magic  
 tints;  
 The senses these may please, not buy  
 the heart.  
 True woman's love cannot be had for  
 crowns;  
 Be he a slave or king, it seeks a *man*;  
 And ere it find it is a humming bird  
 To glance from flower to flower, but,  
 nested once,  
 A nightingale that thrills out constant  
 songs.

*Enter BELSHAZZAR in his crown and  
 royal robes.*

BELSHAZZAR. .

A witch by Jewish law is judged to  
 flames,  
 And she who scorches me should burn  
 herself.

EVA.

Why seek the fire that never goes to  
 thee?

Thy parrot singed avoids the harmful  
blaze.

BELSHAZZAR.

Thou art the lamp, and I the moth that  
flies  
To fall upon the bosom of the flame.

EVA.

Nay! be no more an insect but a king;  
Seek thou to wed from thine own royal  
rank,  
One who will bind thy monarch-limbs  
in steel,  
And urge thee drive the Persian from  
thy walls.

BELSHAZZAR.

Girl, I'm a fool to beg a captive's love  
When I could force thee to my clasp-  
ing arms,

Where beauty o'er my realm but  
pants to lie.

Yet 'tis my wish to hear thee say "I  
love,"

And see thee at my side a willing wife.  
I would not break the stem that holds  
the flower,

Or spoil by force the bloom that is its  
pride;

Give me thy heart and I will be a man.

EVA.

I cannot, king, since 'tis another's right!  
His, sign'd and seal'd by an eternal  
pledge,

Which, broke by me, would worthless  
make myself—

A ring whose holes do show the jewel  
gone.

BELSHAZZAR.

To bless cannot be wrong, and thy pure  
love

Would make my nature new, my pas-  
sions tame,

Start in my breast the pulses of true  
life,

Enplume my brow, and case my limbs  
in mail,

Till I by valour earn'd the crown I  
wear.

EVA.

What I have sign'd away I cannot give.  
Could I pierce him I love with mortal  
pain,

His vows betray, and trample on his  
heart,

And blast his faith in me till I would  
live

No more his star, but in his soul a blot?  
Thou art too noble, king, to ask me  
this.

BELSHAZZAR.

Proud slave, I'll plead no more, nor let  
thee fling

My empire's crown away like some  
worn toy.

The monarch of the world kneels down  
to thee,

And wilt thou say another has thy love,  
Spurning thy king as if he bark'd, thy  
cur?

My nod an empire shakes, and it would  
bring

Ten thousand here whose beauty rivals  
thine.

EVA.

Belshazzar, let them come where I will  
not.

Say, can thy sceptre force the rose to  
bloom,

And fill the morning with its scented  
breath?

A king may crush the flower, not make  
it live,

And take from hearts their blood, but  
not their love.

BELSHAZZAR.

Slave, I can pluck the honey from thy  
flesh,

And leave a stain to make thy lover  
loathe—

Make thee in thine own eyes a thing  
despoil'd.

EVA.

Thou canst not, king! I in thy palace  
stand,

Thy guards around with points of flashing steel,  
 An empire thine, yet in Jehovah safe.  
 Old Eli's prayer is stronger than thy throne,  
 And holds o'er me Omnipotence, my shield.

BELSHAZZAR.

Girl, that there is in thee I may not touch:  
 Some spell doth keep thee stronger than my lust,  
 And better guards thee than would warrior's mail.  
 Repulsed by thee I rush on to my doom;  
 The curse of ages thunders in my breast,  
 And round my brow fall shadows from my fate.

[Exit BELSHAZZAR.]

EVA.

Belshazzar, sad thy doom to be a king!  
 Oh! had thy gifts been nursed in poverty,  
 Made hard by toil, and large by enterprize,  
 Thy crown by its own weight had kept thy brow;  
 Ancestral power has sunk thee to a boy,  
 Inviting daring to thy tottering realm,  
 Where Cyrus soon will build a vigorous state.  
 I pity thee! am thankless for myself.  
 Thou who dost still the storm and lay the wave,  
 And teach all evil to work out Thy will,  
 I bless Thee for Thy help in peril's hour!  
 When hung a cloud to flash on me its curse,  
 And blast my life with one eternal pang,  
 Thy breath dispell'd, and I stood crown'd with light.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace of Babylon.*

BELSHAZZAR.

Ten wild beasts caged and fighting for their food,  
 Less mad than priests who quarrel o'er their gods;  
 I'll prove that ye love me e'en more than them.  
 Speak, Smerdis, first, and answer what I urge.

SMERDIS.

I kiss thy royal feet, and pray the sun  
 To dart his radiant wisdom through thy mind.

BELSHAZZAR.

Priest! I will put thy faith to my own test.  
 This image see of wood! Is that thy god?

SMERDIS.

Dazzling and vast, our Baal is yon sun,  
 Whose universal light gives life to all;  
 Yet in this statue doth his glory shrine.

BELSHAZZAR.

Thy god, the king of heaven, can guard himself,  
 And blast the arm that hence would hurl him down!

SMERDIS.

Far as his splendid beams can reach his power,  
 And in their light all wisdom stands reveal'd.

BELSHAZZAR.

Now let thy god have care! I strike his head!  
 There see it roll, and rumble on the floor!  
 This trunk is left, which I do thus push o'er,  
 And order to the fire and roast thy god.  
 First on his neck I place my kingly foot;  
 A mortal here insults immortal power,  
 Nor feels its vengeance thunder on his brow.

Renounce thy lies, or else renounce thine ears!

SMERDIS.

O'er me, O King, thy wisdom hath prevail'd.

If Baal will not care, then care not I;  
Let thou mine ears be mine, my god, a lie!

BELSHAZZAR.

Smerdis, enough! I see how deep's thy faith!

Far better, my Madetes, is our creed!

MADETES.

From light and darkness I think all doth spring.

To shrines and statues I will nothing bring;

On altars I good flesh will never throw,  
Since from his god the priest will steal I know.

The earth our temple is, hung round by air,

Yon heav'n its dome, the sun, its lamp, shines there;

Our world eternal in itself doth stand,  
Nor skies, nor stars need a supporting hand;

From nothing we do come, to nothing go,

And hence short lives should gild with pleasure's glow.

Each flower we want, we pluck, nor ask a god

What we shall think or feel beneath the sod.

BELSHAZZAR.

To me most loyal truth, who will not own,

On earth, in heav'n, a power above my throne.

Since I myself of all am only king,  
Hence to the winds all fears and cares I fling;

Let Cyrus gather glory from his toil,  
'Tis pleasure's bloom I snatch, and make my spoil!

MADETES.

Majestic lord of all, stand firm by this—

Make this world sure, and thou art sure of bliss.

BELSHAZZAR.

Old Eli, thy calm face doth trouble me;  
Down at my feet, blind Jew, and own me god!

ELI.

O king, I worship Him who spread the skies,

The earth holds up, and lights the sun and stars,

And kindles in each soul its spark of life.

BELSHAZZAR.

Stop, Jew, beware! An empire's weight on thee

Shall crush thy faith and bend thee to my will.

ELI.

Tear out this tongue, O king, and rend these limbs,

Torture my flesh with flames, my soul send forth

From this poor body scarr'd or burn'd by thee!

Like Baal's image thus far I am thine;  
There stops thy power! Beyond, I am mine own,

Nor can thy royal might my spirit force;

Jehovah first and last I will adore.

Thy records read! Learn how the He-brew youth

Walk'd harmless in the fire that burn'd their bonds;

An angel's hand was Daniel's shield from death!

BELSHAZZAR.

The lies of priests but by their dupes believed!

Where is thy temple, Jew? thine altars where?

And where Jehovah's prophets and his kings?

Thy God, omnipotent, deserts His own,  
And leaves His city to the flames of  
foes!

See in thyself how silly is thy trust!  
Blind, and captive, Eli, curse thy God!

ELI.

'Tis for his sin, O king, that Israel  
serves;

This wreathes our yoke, and robes our  
lives in gloom;

When flow true tears then grace to us  
will flow;

Our chains will then drop off, our temple  
rise,

While we on our own soil will kneel  
and praise.

Firm as Himself Jehovah's word shall  
stand!

BELSHAZZAR.

Ha, Jew! A thought flies flashing o'er  
my brain!

I'll test thy God! Down 'neath our  
Baal's tower,

Thy sacred things which in thy temple  
stood,

Begirt by lamps and priests, now guard-  
ed lie;

Thy God I'll dare, and bring them up  
from thence,

And they shall glitter on my festal  
board.

Better serve me than rust beneath the  
ground!

Thy God's own lamps shall shine, and  
see me drink

From His blest goblets our bright Baal's  
wine:

And mark it, Jew, and grave it on thy  
soul,

Then tell it to thy God, and ask His  
help,

Which thou wilt need—hear, Jew, whom  
I do hate

Next to thy God—thou from Jehovah's  
cups

Shalt drink with me, or I will torture  
thee,

Then fling thee o'er our walls to Per-  
sian dogs,

And see how well thy God will guard  
His Priest.

SCENE II.—*The Tower of Belus.*

BELSHAZZAR.

I loathe to live, and yet dread more to  
die.

To hide the past I'd blot the future out,  
But from the void of nothingness shrink  
back.

I'm like some mount whose ice hides  
eating flames.

This sightless Jew a devil stirs in me  
Who wakes above an Eye that looks me  
through.

One shatter'd god I've turn'd by fire to  
smoke,

And here will prove Jehovah, too, a lie.

*Enter* MADETES.

Madetes, brave old man, in time for  
work!

MADETES.

O King, I go alone—risk not thy life!

BELSHAZZAR.

By Baal, no! down I will walk with thee  
If shakes the earth; and Heav'n shall  
fall on me

I'll crown my feast, and dare what  
Cyrus dreads;

He offers to the gods whom I defy.

MADETES.

Maybe this thundering storm should  
make thee pause.

BELSHAZZAR.

Dost thou draw back? Madetes proved  
a boy,

And in his lingering breast a fear of  
gods!

Does this tower shake, and nod against  
the winds?

Do yon skies roar, and quiver on the  
clouds

Quick-flashing fires? Groans this world  
now in death?

'Tis in the din of such tempestuous war  
I will descend, and beard this Jewish  
god.

*[They pass down a dark stairway, leading through a subterranean aisle, to the place of the sacred things.]*

MADETES.

A dim and lonely place! Yet will we  
on!

The storm's mad noise here soon will  
die away.

BELSHAZZAR.

Madetes, stop! that song most wild and  
strange!

MADETES.

I hear no sound save the far tempest's  
voice,

Whose roarings sink to whispers in this  
gloom.

FIRST SPIRIT.

From realms where ne'er can flash the  
light

I come, I come who make the night,  
And soon, Belshazzar, soon I'll roll  
Eternal gloom around thy soul.

BELSHAZZAR.

My pulse is calm! no drop is on my  
brow!

And yet I swear I heard the words as  
plain

As if they murmur'd from Atossa's lip.

SECOND SPIRIT.

The Spirit of sound is o'er thee, King,  
Thro' earth, and thro' heav'n whose  
thunders ring;

By this loud peal I do warn thee now  
To fly, or feel my blight on thy brow.

BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis not my terror shapes such words in  
air,

As I to mortal ears may ne'er repeat.

MADETES.

Nay! here all's still, howe'er the tower  
may rock.

BELSHAZZAR.

For me, not thee, these warning angels  
sing,

And hence the aisles of sound in thee  
are shut.

THIRD SPIRIT.

I flashing come, the Soul of fire;

I hurl the lightnings in mine ire,

To blast along the sea

And on the land to kill;

So terrible their glee,

So fierce to do my will.

Back, false Belshazzar, whence thou  
came!

On thee I'll dart my zig-zag flame.

BELSHAZZAR.

All elements combine—earth, air and  
fire—

And Hades rises here to drive me back.

MADETES.

Nay, oh my king, 'tis but thy fancy  
hears;

Since round us broods the silence of the  
night,

And scarce I note our footfall on the  
stones.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

I'm the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of  
Power,

To hurl down the ship, and to shake  
down the tower;

'Tis grim Death at my side that rideth  
with me,

As I rush o'er the land and dash o'er  
the sea.

I'm the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of  
Power,

And, Belshazzar, go back, or short is  
thine hour!

BELSHAZZAR.

Could I be turn'd, these words would  
drive me off.



But see the gleam of yonder glittering  
lamps  
Which kindle in my breast resolve so  
strong,  
Jehovah's breath can never put it out!

## FIFTH SPIRIT.

Thy blood, Belshazzar, from me flows,  
Who won the crown that round thee  
glows;  
Thy kingdom stands built by my hand,  
Thy scepter sways by my command.  
Now by the flesh and by the bones  
Of all our kings beneath these stones;  
Now by their souls which death holds  
here,  
And all their hope and all their fear,  
I warn thee, son, away! away!  
And seek the realms where shines the  
day;  
Else on thy brow Fate writes thy doom,  
And soon will hurl thee to thy tomb,  
While on thy name and line a blot,  
And on thy soul eternal spot.  
Thy foe upon thy throne shall sit,  
Then Ruin o'er his empire flit;  
The bat shall fly, and hoot the owl,  
The fox shall lurk, the wolf shall prowl,  
While Babylon beneath the ground  
Lies ages hid in dust, to be by strangers  
found.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Thou father of our line, dost thou speak  
this?  
I hurl thy curses back upon thy head,  
And still will on where tempts our  
bright'ning prize!

## MADETES.

The priests asleep, behold the sacred  
things  
Most brilliant in the blaze of watchful  
lamps!  
These holy curs snore well beneath the  
ground!  
Pierce thou that Jew, O King, and I  
will this!

[BELSHAZZAR and MADETES each kills  
a priest.]

## BELSHAZZAR.

No thunders burst, nor lightnings may  
flash here;  
These vessels in our grasp, we'll dare  
their God!

## MADETES.

The dastard priests I'll strip, and in  
their robes  
Will tie our prize and take it up to light.

## BELSHAZZAR.

Madetes, well! I'll help thee bear thy  
load  
Nor let Jehovah pluck it from my arms!  
A watchful God when we can slay his  
priests,  
Their garments take, and rob him of  
his gold!  
He sleeps, or feels that I'm the stronger  
king.  
His arm is powerless, or he'd crush  
me now;  
Immortal glory lights Belshazzar's brow.

## ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The Banqueting-hall of the Palace; BELSHAZZAR in purple robes, crowned and sceptered on his throne, before him a table with a goblet of wine on the mercy-seat of the Jewish temple. ELI on one side, and SAMMO, an ape, opposite, dressed as High Priest, SMERDIS and MADETES sitting just below BELSHAZZAR; the Lords of the Empire at a table extending around the room, and near its middle a pile of the Jewish sacred utensils, while a hundred spearmen stand in a square around ELI.*

## BELSHAZZAR.

My Lords, I'm king by merit, and by  
birth,  
Since I worse perils braved than Per-  
sia's wars,  
And ventured down where Cyrus dared  
not go.  
These splendid gifts I from Jehovah  
took,

While rock'd our frighten'd tower up  
 into heav'n,  
 And thunder, storm, and fire 'mid cavern'd gloom,  
 With warning spirits, strove to keep  
 me back.  
 Hence I sit god of Earth! take Heav'n  
 who will!

MADETES.

From Jewish cups we pour to thee our  
 wine!

SMERDIS.

Once priest of sun and moon, I worship  
 thee!

COURTIERS.

Hail! thou Belshazzar, hail! our king  
 and god.

BELSHAZZAR.

Am I not better than a power unseen—  
 A phantom born of fear and hence  
 despised—

My crown can flash its glory in your  
 eyes;

My scepter ye behold grasp'd by my  
 hand,

As I impurpled sit on earth my throne;  
 A god in flesh, and not in wood or  
 stone.

ALL.

We worship thee, Belshazzar, only thee!

BELSHAZZAR.

And Sammo there, with grave and  
 mitred brow,

In sacerdotal robes, I name my priest!  
 Gone now my faith in gods, I turn to  
 brutes,

And feel a glowing brotherhood with  
 them.

Sammo has eyes, and what have we men  
 more?

He hears, feels, smells, and tastes, and  
 so do we.

He knows, and loves, and hates just like  
 ourselves,

In blood, and bone, and food, and flesh  
 the same,

While death will turn us into common  
 dust.

See Sammo as he drains Jehovah's cup,  
 And my true priest, pours out his wine  
 to me!

Eli, my ape more loyal is than thee.

ELI.

Blasted the hand and lip that mock my  
 God!

BELSHAZZAR.

Ha! thou dost curse me, Jew, and curse  
 my priest!

Yet better he than thee! The ape has  
 eyes,

While blind the Jew! The ape doth  
 love his king;

The Jew doth hate! The ape will rever-  
 ence

Where the Jew blasphemes! Blest by  
 me the ape:

Thou, Jew, my slave, and old and sight-  
 less, too!

Forsake thy god who leaves thee thus  
 to me:

To Sammo I more kind than he to thee.

ELI.

Clouds on His throne, above yet all is  
 bright;

Him I adore Who is Eternal Light.

BELSHAZZAR.

Around me here my splendid empire  
 sits,

And in this blaze of lamps, Jew, thou  
 shalt kneel

Before my lords, and own Belshazzar  
 god.

Draw closer, guards! Point at his breast  
 your spears!

ELI.

Thee I defy, but welcome give thy steel!

BELSHAZZAR.

Thy lips have fixed thy doom! Be  
 ready, slaves!

Each aim his weapon true, and to the heart!—  
 But stay your spears! What writes on yonder wall?  
 A phantom-hand moves there beneath a cloud,  
 And traces mystic characters of fire!  
 It tells my tottering empire's fate and mine!  
 Jehovah is the god, and this his hand!  
 Apostate Priests, explain those words, or die!  
 Ye tremble and are dumb! Guards, pierce them through!  
 No mercy beg! Your agonies are vain!  
 If I am damn'd, I thus make sure your doom!  
 Jew, thou art free, and by Jehovah saved!  
 Throned, crown'd, and scepter'd, here I'll meet my fate.

ELI.

Lo! Daniel comes! He'll read these words for thee—  
 May be through penitence may give thee life!

*Enter DANIEL, who kneels before the throne and then slowly rises.*

BELSHAZZAR.

By Heav'n's kind guidance brought now near this place,  
 Thou, prophet of Jehovah, art my hope!  
 What mean those blazing words that blast my sight?

DANIEL.

These vessels sacred to our temple's use  
 By thee profaned have waked Jehovah's wrath.  
 Weigh'd in His balance thou art wanting found:  
 The Medes and Persians will thine empire take.

BELSHAZZAR.

Jew, on thy brow plays Heav'n's own holy fire,  
 And I thy words believe that seal my fate.

About thy neck I hang this chain of gold,  
 And robe thee with the scarlet badge of kings.  
 Yea! all too late I offer to thy God,  
 Before whose eye we monarchs are but dust!  
 There bursts the storm! I hear the clash of arms!  
 Lo! over Babylon the glare of flames!  
 I'll die a king and near mine empire's throne!

*Enter GORGAS, ATYS, ABNER, and ONO, with Persian soldiers, who kill BELSHAZZAR, bravely fighting.*

GORGAS.

Ye Princes, and ye Lords of Babylon!  
 The troops of Cyrus o'er your palace swarm,  
 Your city hold, your gates and towers possess.  
 See there your king discrown'd, and in his blood—  
 Last of a race who steep'd a world in tears!  
 Heavy on him the sins of ages press!  
 These sacred gifts, profaned, his madness show;  
 Yon Jew, and mitred ape his blasphemy.  
 Your plunder'd wealth, your persons scarr'd by wounds,  
 Your state by taxes drain'd, and eunuchs robb'd,  
 Your murder'd sons, your wives and daughters stain'd,  
 Have doomed this bloated empire to its death.  
 Both Heav'n and Earth combine to end such rule,  
 And hide in night the star of Babylon,  
 Which, o'er the throne of Cyrus now will rise,  
 And like a sun will bless a subject world.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Palace of Babylon—CYRUS in purple robes, crowned and sceptered on his throne, surrounded by courtiers.*

CYRUS.

Princes, and Lords, our throne made strong and sure,  
We will inquire what touches our wide realm,  
Regions remote by highways now drawn near,  
Make Babylon our mighty empire's heart,  
That pulses out its life to each far part.  
Tell, Atys, how our posts our kingdoms join!

ATYS.

So swift from town to town, and state to state  
Our riders rushing fly, that in ten days,  
As borne on winds, our capital has news  
From India's plains of fire, and Scythia's snows,  
And Tigris with the Ganges seems to talk,  
And North to South, and East to West are bound.  
Our doves bear over heav'n, as wing'd by it,  
What speediest we would hear, until our realm  
Is like a room where whispering sounds grow loud.

CYRUS.

Atys, thou hast done well, and proved me wise.  
A monarch's glory is to choose fit men,  
Each for his sphere, and then his empire is  
One body moved, and order'd by one soul.  
My Gorgias, are our Satrapies well fill'd?  
Our rulers should be mirrors of ourselves,  
As we do image forth the King of day,  
Who sends his blest and bounteous beams on all.

GORGAS.

Each satrap to thine empire's farthest bound  
By me is chosen from the land he rules,  
That knit to it by birth and blood and speech,  
His acts may be with knowledge, and in love.  
States to thy throne are held like anchor'd ships,  
Whose cables keep them from the tossing sea.

CYRUS.

Most cheering this! Till Peace war's wounds has heal'd,  
And from her horn pour'd plenty o'er our realm,  
Let Egypt doze, and dream along her Nile!  
When ready, we leviathan will wake,  
And lay his carcass rotting on his shores.

GORGAS.

A noble Jew would seek thy presence, King,  
If thee it please, and plead his nation's cause.

CYRUS.

Let him draw near: I owe his race a debt.  
In a dark hour one brought a light to me  
Whose ray led on to this Chaldean throne,  
And stream'd around my brow immortal beams.

*Enter ELI, led by ABNER and ONO.*

That form I know, and that most princely face!  
I've seen it in my boyhood's morning dreams  
On Persia's hills, and in the Median groves,  
Till it seems link'd to all my life by fate.  
Old Jew, my father's self not better known  
Than thou, who waved me on to Babylon

Like some bright angel standing in the sun.

My life's long dream, I clasp thee to my heart!

CYRUS embraces ELI.

These younger Jews I know, and welcome them!

Ye bore the Holy Book which brought me here!

Ask, Eli, what thou wilt, and it is thine, E'en to the jewels sparkling in my crown.

ELI.

Most gracious King, from Heav'n thy matchless gifts!

Jehovah watch'd thy youth, thy manhood led,

And throned thee here to give us liberty.

Jerusalem is low, tears on her cheeks, And sorrow in her heart, widow'd and lone,

And sitting in the dust weigh'd down by chains.

Our fetters break, and send us to our land

That we may build on Zion's holy hill Our temple high, crown'd with the light of Heav'n!

CYRUS.

Good Jew, 'tis done! My scribes, record my will!

Gold thou shalt have, and make thy city shine

In glory worthy of King David's line.

ELI.

Thanks to thee, King, and to Jehovah, praise!

My eyes see not, but oh! my heart can feel,

And I can drop a tear to show my joy. An old man's blessing rest on thee and thine;

Thine empire live while sun and moon may shine!

CYRUS.

Ye Princes and ye Lords of Babylon, But in eternal right can stand our throne,

By Love and Justice clasped, while Heav'n smiles down!

If kings oppress, the people will rebel, And hurl at last base tyrants from their seats.

Rulers who grind the poor to pamper lust

Like monstrous wild beasts should be chased to death.

Good Jew, I've done what Justice claim'd as due;

Jehovah guard my realm, and Israel bless!

SCENE II.—*A Cloister of the Temple of Jerusalem, which alone had survived the fire of the Chaldeans.*

ELI.

So keen my sense, that when across the moon

The evening bat on leaden wing may flit,

I feel its shadow moving o'er mine eyes; And I can hear the velvet-footed fox Who lurks and looks along the broken wall.

Such added pain and power my blindness gives,

Since one sense lost, the rest its life receive.

Oh, in this cloister'd spot, saved from the fire

If blacken'd by its breath, I'd rather be Than on the throne of purple Babylon. Thank Heav'n I have no mem'ries here from sight!

My last glance saw our temple robed in flames,

Each dying glory heighten'd in their blaze;

Nor did I see Belshazzar's face, or land, And bless the night that veil'd them from mine eyes.

Oh here, Jehovah, let thy servant die— From here mine eyes be open'd on thy face!

And here my flesh lie down to take its rest,

Then borne out hence to our dear mountain-tomb!

But I hear Abner's step upon the stones!

*Enter ABNER.*



What news, my son, from our long-  
building wall?  
I have not heard since morn the trowel's  
clink.  
Instead, there rose one burst of sudden  
joy,  
That spent itself, and deeper silence left.

ABNER.

Father, the wall is done—our city saved,  
And we have raised an altar on this hill  
To have at morn and eve the sacrifice.  
Our shouts thou heardst, that burst  
from heart to lip,  
While the calm skies look'd down and  
smiled their love.

ELI.

To Israel's God the praise! His name  
I bless!  
He led us through our night to glory's  
dawn!  
This day's immortal—tell me more of it!

ABNER.

The wall was built, except a corner'd  
part,  
When up on us Samaria hurl'd a troop  
With one last desp'rate shock to stop  
our work;  
Like some mad stream that foams o'er  
mountain rocks  
Our Ono charged the foe, their leader  
struck,  
Who headless from his horse fell to the  
earth,  
And then the Jews, made bold, rush'd  
on with shouts,  
Flash'd high their swords, and drove  
the robbers back,  
While all the hill was ghastly with their  
dead.  
I then call'd round our men to end their  
work,  
And ere the sun could mark one linger-  
ing hour,  
So hot their zeal, they shouted it was  
done.

ELI.

Oh, I can see Jerusalem again  
Climb down these vales, and gleam  
along our hills,

And in her midst our pillar'd temple  
rise!  
Here, son, the mantle of my priesthood  
take,  
And, mitred, slay for me the evening  
lamb.  
My work is o'er—my office hence be  
thine!

ABNER.

Like our false sires when Moses smote  
the rock,  
For living streams, I had the murmuring  
lip.  
Cleansed now my stain, but not by me  
forgot,  
I vow that I will wed my priestly work,  
And to Jehovah's glory give my life!

*Enter ONO and EVA.*

ELI.

My children, blest by Heaven, and in  
yourselves  
I thought I heard your voices mur-  
muring near;  
Ono, thine arm proves royal as thy  
blood,  
And fit thy brow to wear King David's  
crown:  
Our Eva happy, shelter'd at thy side!  
Happy your home, hung round by fra-  
grant bloom!  
Oh, lead me where my own long wedded  
years  
Flew wing'd with joy, and tell me as  
we go  
How looks in brilliant beauty forth our  
land,  
Which on these longing eyes may smile  
no more!

[*ONO and EVA kiss and embrace ELI,  
and conduct him to their home,  
while ABNER remains in the clois-  
ter.*]

How sweet the breath of this fresh  
evening air  
That whispering lifts the locks from  
my old brow!

EVA.

How Olivet doth glow, tipp'd by the sun,



While gorge and cliff flash back his  
golden light!

ELI.

In boyhood oft I climbed his hoary  
sides,  
And chased from rock to rock the  
brown gazelle.

ONO.

And there, like one long line of waving  
gold,  
The queen of seas lies waiting for the  
stars,  
That soon will find a mirror in her face.

ELI.

Once those same waves I saw from  
Carmel's top  
Where our Elijah knelt and open'd  
heaven.

EVA.

One fitful gleam shows where the Dead  
Sea sleeps,  
Then settles o'er the South a hiding  
haze.

ELI.

Oft on those shores, still as my grave  
will be  
And void of life, I've bent my musing  
steps—  
While mem'ry saw the flames roll o'er  
in doom.

ONO.

Sweet in his silver Jordan winds along,  
Bloom on his banks, and music in his  
song;  
Soon o'er his hills will climb the clus-  
tering vine:  
Soon in his vales will golden harvests  
shine.  
Judea's life is from his murmuring flow,  
Where hope now brightens in yon sunset  
glow.

ELI.

Oh, that these eyes could see the beauty  
there!  
Yet memory still recalls the scenes so  
fair,

Where my young manhood led my bril-  
liant bride  
Bright as the roses on the river's side.

EVA.

The sun's last glance is on Siloam's  
pool,  
That seems a glittering gem in emerald  
set,

While Cedron dashes on in mountain  
glee;

The temple-hill shines with resplendent  
glow,

As when Jehovah gleam'd there through  
His cloud.

From our new altar its first flash of  
fire!

Lo, o'er its smoke a rainbow smiling  
bends,

And down on Israel sheds the light of  
hope.

ELI.

I weary grow, and on some stone must  
rest:

Here I will sit, and tell my dream to  
you.

As I lay sleeping in my cloister'd nook,  
I thought I saw our temple rise once  
more.

Low linger'd in mine ear that chanted  
psalm

Sung oft responsive by our white-robed  
choirs,

Where comes the King of Glory from  
his gates.

Soothed by the warbled sounds, I smiled  
with joy.

Its altar earth, and the starr'd heaven  
its dome,

Jehovah's house grew to the universe.  
Then One, who was our God, and yet

was man,

Died 'mid a gloom that rolled our shak-  
ing world;

But soon burst from his grave, and rose  
to Heaven,

Resplendent there, and everlasting  
Priest:

Anon, on clouds He came, 'mid angels  
throned,  
In flashing might, to sit majestic Judge;  
Last, earth was wrapp'd in fire, and  
from the blaze  
A new world rose in an immortal bloom,

And saints and cherubim with songs  
adored  
Him, ever King, both Human and  
Divine.

JOHN M. LEAVITT  
(*Published New York, 1876.*)



DANIEL  
A SACRED DRAMA



# DANIEL

*A Sacred Drama.*

*The righteous is delivered out of trouble,  
and the wicked cometh in his stead.*  
—Proverbs of Solomon.

*On peut des plus grands rois surprendre  
la justice,  
Incapable de tromper,  
Ils ont peine a s'échapper  
Des pièges de l'artifice.*  
*Un cœur noble ne peut soupçonner en  
autrui  
La bassesse et la malice  
Qu'il ne sent point en lui.*  
—Esther. Tragedie de Racine.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DARIUS, king of Media and Babylon.  
PHARNACES, } courtiers, enemies to Daniel.  
SORANUS, }  
ARASPES, a young Median lord, friend  
and convert to Daniel.  
DANIEL.

SCENE—*The city of Babylon.*

*The subject is taken from the sixth  
chapter of the prophet Daniel.*

## PART I.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

PHARNACES.

YES!—I have noted with a jealous eye.  
The pow'r of this new fav'rite! Daniel  
reigns,  
And not Darius! Daniel guides the  
springs  
Which move this mighty empire. Hhgh  
he sits,

Supreme in favour with both prince and  
people.  
Where is the spirit of our Median lords,  
Tamely to crouch and bend the supple  
knee  
To this new god! By Mithras, 'tis too  
much!  
Shall great Arbaces' race to Daniel bow!  
A foreigner, a captive, and a Jew?  
Something must be devis'd, and that  
right soon,  
To shake his credit.

SORANUS.

Rather hope to shake  
The mountain pine, whose twisting fibres  
clasp  
The earth, deep rooted! Rather hope to  
shake  
The Scythian Taurus from his central  
base!  
No—Daniel sits too absolute in pow'r,  
Too firm in favour, for the keenest shaft  
Of nicely-aiming jealousy to reach him.

PHARNACES.

Rather he sits too high to sit securely,  
Yes! he has reached that pinnacle of  
pow'r  
Which closely touches on depression's  
verge.  
Hast thou then liv'd in courts? hast thou  
grown gray  
Beneath the mask a subtle statesman  
wears,  
To hide his secret soul, and dost not  
know  
That of all fickle Fortune's transient  
gifts,  
Favour is most deceitful? 'Tis a beam,  
Which darts uncertain brightness for a  
moment!



The faint precarious, fickle shine of  
 pow'r;  
 Giv'n without merit, by caprice with-  
 drawn.  
 No trifle is so small as what obtains,  
 Save that which loses favour, 'tis a  
 breath,  
 Which hangs upon a smile! A look, a  
 word,  
 A frown, the air-built tower of fortune  
 shakes,  
 And down the unsubstantial fabric falls!  
 Darius, just and clement as he is,  
 If I mistake not, may be wrought upon  
 By prudent wiles, by Flatt'ry's pleasant  
 cup,  
 Administer'd with caution.

SORANUS.

But the means?  
 For Daniel's life (a foe must grant him  
 that)  
 Is so replete with goodness, so adorn'd  
 With every virtue so exactly squar'd  
 By wisdom's nicest rules, 'twill be most  
 hard  
 To charge him with the shadow of of-  
 fence.  
 Pure is his fame as Scythia's mountain  
 snows,  
 When not a breath pollutes them! O  
 Pharnaces,  
 I've scann'd the actions of his daily life  
 With all th' industrious malice of a foe;  
 And nothing meets mine eye but deeds  
 of honour!  
 In office pure; for equitable acts  
 Renown'd: in justice and impartial truth,  
 The Grecian Themis is not more severe.

PHARNACES.

By yon bright sun, thou blazon'st forth  
 his praise  
 As if with rapture thou did'st read the  
 page  
 Where these fair deeds are written!

SORANUS.

Thou mistak'st.  
 I only meant to show what cause we  
 have  
 To hate and fear him. I but meant to  
 paint

His popular virtues and eclipsing merit.  
 Then for devotion and religious zeal,  
 Who so renown'd as Daniel? Of his  
 law  
 Observant in th' extreme. Thrice ev'ry  
 day  
 With prostrate reverence, he adores his  
 God:  
 With superstitious awe his face he turns  
 Tow'rds his belov'd Jerusalem, as if  
 Some local, partial God, might there be  
 found  
 To hear his supplication. No affair  
 Of state, no business so importunate,  
 No pleasure so alluring, no employ  
 Of such high import, to seduce his zeal  
 From this observance due!

PHARNACES.

There, there he falls!  
 Enough, my friend! His piety destroys  
 him.  
 There, at the very footstool of his  
 God,  
 Where he implores protection, there I'll  
 crush him.

SORANUS.

What means Pharnaces?

PHARNACES.

Ask not what I mean,  
 The new idea floating in my brain  
 Has yet receiv'd no form. 'Tis yet too  
 soon  
 To give it body, circumstance, or breath.  
 The seeds of mighty deeds are lab'ring  
 here,  
 And struggling for a birth! 'Tis near  
 the hour  
 The king is wont to summon us to  
 council:  
 Ere that, this big conception of my  
 mind  
 I'll shape to form and being. Thou,  
 meanwhile,  
 Convene our chosen friends: for I shall  
 need  
 The aid of all your councils, and the  
 weight  
 Of grave authority.

SORANUS.

Who shall be trusted?

PHARNACES.

With our immediate motive none, except

A chosen band of friends, who most repine

At Daniel's exaltation.—But the scheme I meditate must be disclos'd to all

Who bear high office; all our Median rulers,

Princes and captains, presidents and lords;

All must assemble. 'Tis a common cause:

All but the young Araspes: he inclines To Daniel and his God. He sits attent,

With ravish'd ears, to listen to his lore. With rev'rence names Jerusalem, and reads

The volume of the law. No more he bows

To hail the golden Ruler of the Day. But looks for some great Prophet,

greater far,

So they pretend, than Mithras! From him, therefore,

Conceal whate'er of injury is devis'd 'Gainst Daniel. Be it to thy care to-day

To keep him from the council.

SORANUS.

'Tis well thought.

'Tis now about the hour of Daniel's prayer.

Araspes, too, is with him! and to-day They will not sit in council. Haste we then.

Designs of high importance, once conceiv'd

Should be accomplish'd! Genius which discerns,

And courage which achieves, despise the aid

Of ling'ring Circumspection! The keen spirit

Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought

Start into instant action, and at once Plans and performs, resolves and executes!

PART II.

SCENE—*Daniel's House.*

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

Proceed, proceed, thrice venerable sage, Enlighten my dark mind with this new

ray,  
This dawning of salvation! Tell me more

Of this expected King! this Comforter! This Promise of the nations! this great

Hope  
Of anxious Israel! This unborn

Prophet!  
This wonderful, this mighty Counselor!

This everlasting Lord! this Prince of Peace!

This balm of Gilead, which shall heal the wounds

Of universal nature! this Messiah! Redeemer, Saviour, Sufferer, Victim,

God!

DANIEL.

Enough to animate our faith, we know, But not enough to soothe the curious

pride  
Of vain philosophy! Enough to cheer

Our path we see, the rest is hid in clouds;

And heaven's own shadows rest upon the view!

ARASPES.

Go on, blest sage! I could for ever hear, Untir'd, thy admonition! tell me how

I shall obtain the favour of that God I but begin to know, but fain would

serve.

DANIEL.

By deep humility, by faith unfeign'd, By holy deeds, best proof of living faith!

O Faith,\* thou wonder-working principle,

Eternal substance of our present hope, Thou evidence of things invisible!

What cannot man sustain, sustain'd by thee!

\* *Hebrews, chap. xi.*

The time would fail, and the bright star  
 of day  
 Would quench his beams in ocean, and  
 resign  
 His empire to the silver queen of night;  
 And she again descend the steep of  
 heaven,  
 If I should tell what wonders Faith  
 achiev'd  
 By Gideon, Barak, and the holy seer,  
 Elkanah's son; the pious Gileadite,  
 Ill-fated Jephthah! He of Zorah, too\*  
 In strength unequal'd; and the shep-  
 herd-king  
 Who vanquish'd Gath's fell giant! Need  
 I tell  
 Of holy prophets, who' by conqu'ring  
 Faith,  
 Wrought deeds incredible to mortal  
 sense;  
 Vanquish'd contending kingdoms, quell'd  
 the rage  
 Of furious pestilence, extinguish'd fire!  
 Victorious Faith! others by thee en-  
 dur'd  
 Exile, disgrace, captivity, and death!  
 Some uncomplaining, bore (nor be it  
 deem'd  
 The meanest exercise of well-try'd  
 Faith)  
 The cruel mocking, and the bitter taunt,  
 Foul obloquy, and undeserv'd reproach:  
 Despising shame, that death to human  
 pride!

ARASPES.

How shall this faith be sought?

DANIEL.

By earnest prayer.  
 Solicit first the wisdom from above;  
 Wisdom, whose fruits are purity and  
 peace!  
 Wisdom! that bright intelligence, which  
 sat  
 Supreme, when with his golden com-  
 passes†  
 Th' Eternal plann'd the fabric of the  
 world,  
 Produc'd his fair idea into light,

\*Samson.

†See *Paradise Lost*, book vii, line 225.  
*Proverbs*, chap. viii, ver. 27.

And said, that all was good! Wisdom,  
 blest beam!

The brightness of the everlasting light!  
 The spotless mirror of the power of  
 God!

The reflex image of th' all perfect Mind!  
 A stream translucent, flowing from the  
 source

Of glory infinite! a cloudless light!  
 Defilement cannot touch nor sin pollute  
 Her unstain'd purity! Not Ophir's gold,  
 Nor Ethiopia's gems can match her  
 price!

The ruby of the mine is pale before  
 her!

And, like the oil Elisha's bounty bless'd,  
 She is a treasure which doth grow by  
 use,

And multiply by spending! She con-  
 tains,

Within herself the sum of excellence.  
 If riches are desir'd, wisdom is wealth!  
 If prudence, where shall keen Inven-  
 tion find

Artificer more cunning? If renown,  
 In her right hand it comes! If piety,  
 Are not her labours virtues? If the  
 lore

Which sage Experience teaches, lo! she  
 scans

Antiquity's dark truths; the past she  
 knows,

Anticipates the future; not by arts  
 Forbidden, of Chaldean sorcerer,  
 But from the piercing ken of deep Fore-  
 knowledge.

From her sure science of the human  
 heart

She weighs effects with causes, ends  
 with means;

Resolving all into the sovereign will.  
 For earthly blessings moderate be thy  
 pray'r

And qualified; for light, for strength,  
 for grace,

Unbounded thy petition.

ARASPES.

Now, O prophet!  
 Explain the secret doubts which rack  
 my mind,

And my weak sense confound. Give  
 me some line

To sound the depths of Providence!  
 O say,

Why the ungodly prosper? why their  
 root  
 Shoots deep, and their thick branches  
 flourish fair,  
 Like the green bay tree? why the right-  
 eous man,  
 Like tender plants to shiv'ring winds  
 expos'd,  
 Is strip'd and torn, in naked Virtue  
 bare,  
 And nipp'd by cruel Sorrow's biting  
 blast?  
 Explain, O Daniel, these mysterious  
 ways  
 To my faint apprehension! For as  
 yet  
 I've much to learn. Fair Truth's im-  
 mortal sun  
 Is sometimes hid in clouds; not that  
 her light  
 Is in itself defective; but obscur'd  
 By my weak prejudice, imperfect Faith,  
 And all the thousand causes which ob-  
 struct  
 The growth of goodness.

DANIEL.

Follow me, Araspes.  
 Within thou shalt peruse the sacred  
 page,  
 The book of life eternal! *that* will show  
 thee  
 The end of the ungodly; thou wilt own  
 How short their longest period; wilt  
 perceive  
 How black a night succeeds their  
 brightest day!  
 Thy purg'd eye will see God is not  
 slack,  
 As men count slackness, to fulfil His  
 word.  
 Weigh well this book; and may the  
 Spirit of grace,  
 Who stamp'd the seal of truth on the  
 bless'd page,  
 Descend into thy soul, remove thy  
 doubts,  
 Clear the perplex'd, and solve the in-  
 tricate,  
 Till faith be lost in sight, and hope  
 in joy!

### PART III.

DARIUS *on his throne*—PHARNACES,  
 SORANUS, *princes, presidents, and*  
*courtiers.*

PHARNACES.

Hail! king Darius, live for ever!

DARIUS.

Welcome!

Welcome, my princes, presidents, and  
 friends!  
 Now tell me, has your wisdom aught  
 devis'd  
 To aid the commonwealth? In our new  
 empire,  
 Subdu'd Chaldaea, is there aught re-  
 mains  
 Your prudence can suggest to serve the  
 state,  
 To benefit the subject, to redress  
 And raise the injur'd, to assist the op-  
 press'd,  
 And humble the oppressor? If you  
 know,  
 Speak freely, princes! Why am I a  
 king,  
 Except to poise the awful scale of jus-  
 tice  
 With even hand; to minister to want;  
 To bless the nations with a lib'ral rule,  
 Vicegerent of th' eternal Oromasdes?

PHARNACES.

So absolute thy wisdom, mighty king,  
 All counsel were superfluous.

DARIUS.

Hold, Pharnaces!

No adulation; 'tis the death of virtue;  
 Who flatters is of all mankind the  
 lowest,  
 Save he who courts flattery. Kings are  
 men,  
 As feeble and as frail as those they  
 rule,  
 And born like them, to die. The Lydian  
 monarch,  
 Unhappy Cræsus, lately sat aloft,  
 Almost above mortality; now see him!  
 Sunk to the vile condition of a slave,

He swells the train of Cyrus! I, like  
 him,  
 To misery am obnoxious. See this  
 throne;  
 This royal throne the great Nebassar  
 fill'd;  
 Yet hence his pride expell'd him! Yonder  
 wall,  
 The dread terrific writing to the eyes  
 Of proud Belshazzar show'd; sad monu-  
 ments  
 Of Heav'n's tremendous vengeance! and  
 shall I,  
 Unwarn'd by such examples, cherish  
 pride?  
 Yet to their dire calamities I owe  
 The brightest gem that glistens in my  
 crown,  
 Sage Daniel. If my speech have aught  
 of worth,  
 Or if my life with aught of good be  
 grac'd,  
 To him alone I owe it.

SORANUS [*aside to Pharnaces*].

Now Pharnaces,  
 Will he run o'er and dwell upon his  
 praise,  
 As if we ne'er had heard it; nay, will  
 swell  
 The nauseous catalogue with many a  
 virtue  
 His own fond fancy coins.

PHARNACES.

O, great Darius!  
 Let thine unworthy servant's words find  
 grace,  
 And meet acceptance in his royal ear,  
 Who subjugates the east! Let not the  
 king  
 With anger hear my pray'r.

DARIUS.

Pharnaces, speak;  
 I know thou lov'st me; I but meant to  
 chide  
 Thy flatt'ry, not reprove thee for thy  
 zeal.  
 Speak boldly, friends, as man should  
 speak to man.  
 Perish the barb'rous maxims of the  
 east,

Which basely would enslave the free-  
 born mind,  
 And plunder man of the best gift of  
 Heav'n,  
 His liberty of soul.

PHARNACES.

Darius, hear me.  
 Thy princes, and the captains of thy  
 bands,  
 Thy presidents, the nobles who bear  
 rule  
 O'er provinces, and I, thine humble  
 creature.  
 Less thn the least in merit, but in love,  
 In zeal, and duty, equal with the first,  
 We have devis'd a measure to confirm  
 Thy infant empire, to establish firmly  
 Thy pow'r and new dominion, and se-  
 cure  
 Thy growing greatness past the pow'r of  
 change.

DARIUS.

I am prepar'd to hear thee. Speak,  
 Pharnaces.

PHARNACES.

The wretched Babylonians long have  
 groan'd  
 Beneath the rule of princes, weak or  
 rash.  
 The rod of pow'r was sway'd alike  
 amiss,  
 By feeble Merodach and fierce Belshaz-  
 zar.  
 One let the slacken'd reins too loosely  
 float  
 Upon the people's neck, and lost his  
 pow'r  
 By nerveless relaxation. He, who fol-  
 low'd,  
 Held with a tyrant's hand the cruel  
 curb,  
 And check'd the groaning nation till it  
 bled;  
 On different rocks they met one common  
 ruin.  
 Their edicts were irresolute, their laws  
 Were feebly plann'd, their counsels ill-  
 advis'd;  
 Now so relax'd, and now so overstrain'd,  
 That the tir'd people, wearied with the  
 weight



They long have borne, will soon disdain controul,  
Tread on all rule, and spurn the hand  
that guides 'em.

DARIUS.

But say what remedy?

PHARNACES.

That, too, O king!  
Thy servants have provided. Hitherto  
They bare the yoke submissive. But to  
fix  
Thy pow'r and their obedience, to reduce  
All hearts to thy dominion, yet avoid  
Those deeds of cruelty thy nature starts  
at,  
Thou should'st begin by some imperial  
act  
Of absolute dominion, yet unstain'd  
By aught of barbarous. For know, O  
king!  
Wholesome severity, if wisely fram'd  
With sober discipline, procures more  
reverence  
Than all the lenient counsels and weak  
measures  
Of frail irresolution.

DARIUS.

Now proceed

To thy request.

PHARNACES.

Not I, but all, request it.  
Be thy imperial edict issued straight,  
And let a firm decree be this day  
pass'd,  
Irrevocable as our Median laws.  
Ordain, that for the space of thirty  
days  
No subject in thy realm shall aught  
request  
Of God or man, except of thee, O  
king!

DARIUS.

Wherefore this strange decree?

PHARNACES.

'Twill fix the crown  
With lasting safety on thy royal brow,

And by a bloodless means, preserve th'  
obedience  
Of this new empire. Think how much  
'twill raise  
Thy high renown! 'Twill make thy  
name rever'd,  
And popular beyond example. What!  
To be as Heav'n, dispensing good and  
ill  
For thirty days! With thine own ears  
to hear  
Thy people's wants, with thine own  
lib'ral hands  
To bless thy suppliant subjects! O,  
Darius!  
Thou'lt seem as bounteous as a giving  
God!  
And reign in ev'ry heart in Babylon  
As well as Media! What a glorious  
state,  
To be the sovereign arbiter of good!  
The first efficient cause of happiness!  
To scatter mercies with a plenteous  
hand,  
And to be blest thyself in blessing others!

DARIUS.

Is this the gen'ral wish?

*[Princes and courtiers kneel.]*

CHIEF PRESIDENT.

Of one, of all.  
Behold thy princes, presidents and lords,  
Thy counselors, and captains! See,  
O king!

*[Presents the edict.]*

Behold the instrument our zeal has  
drawn;  
The edict is prepar'd. We only wait  
The confirmation of thy gracious word,  
And thy imperial signet.

DARIUS.

Say, Pharnaces,  
What penalty awaits the man who dares  
Transgress our mandate?



PHARNACES.

Instant death, O king!  
 This statute says; "Should any subject  
     dare  
 Petition, for the space of thirty days,  
 Of God or man, except of thee, O king!  
 He shall be thrown into yon dreadful  
     den  
 Of hungry lions!"

DARIUS.

Hold! Methinks a deed  
 Of such importance should be wisely  
     weigh'd.

PHARNACES.

We have resolv'd it, mighty king! with  
     care,  
 With closest scrutiny. On us devolve  
 Whatever blame occurs!

DARIUS.

I'm satisfy'd.  
 Then to your wisdom I commit me,  
     princes.  
 Behold the royal signet: see 'tis done.

PHARNACES [*aside*].

There Daniel fell! That signet seal'd  
     his doom.

DARIUS [*after a pause*].

Let me reflect—Sure I have been too  
     rash!  
 Why such intemp'rate haste? But you  
     are wise;  
 And would not counsel this severe de-  
     cree  
 But for the wisest purpose. Yet, me-  
     thinks,  
 I might have weigh'd, and in my mind  
     resolv'd  
 This statute, ere, the royal signet  
     stamp'd,  
 It had been past repeal. Sage Daniel,  
     too!  
 My counsellor, my guide, my well-try'd  
     friend,  
 He should have been consulted; he,  
     whose wisdom  
 I still have found oracular!

PHARNACES.

Mighty king!  
 'Tis as it should be. The decree is  
     past  
 Irrevocable, as the steadfast law  
 Of Mede and Persian, which can never  
     change.  
 Those who observe it live, as is most  
     meet,  
 High in thy grace;—who violate it, die.

## PART IV.

SCENE—DANIEL'S house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

OH, holy Daniel! prophet, father, friend,  
 I come the wretched messenger of ill!  
 Thy foes complot thy death. For what  
     can mean  
 This new-made law, extorted from the  
     king  
 Almost by force? What can it mean,  
     O Daniel,  
 But to involve thee in the toils they  
     spread  
 To snare thy precious life?

DANIEL.

How! was the king  
 Consenting to this edict?

ARASPES.

They surpris'd  
 His easy nature; took him when his  
     heart  
 Was soften'd by their blandishments.  
     They wore  
 The mask of public virtue to deceive  
     him.  
 Beneath the specious name of general  
     good,  
 They wrought him to their purposes:  
     no time  
 Allow'd him to deliberate. One short  
     hour,  
 Another moment, and his soul had gain'd  
 Her natural tone of virtue.

DANIEL.

That great Power  
Who suffers evil only to produce  
Some unseen good, permits that this  
should be:

And HE permitting, I, well pleas'd resign.

Retire, my friend: this is my second  
hour

Of daily pray'r. Anon we'll meet again.  
Here in the open face of that bright  
sun

Thy fathers worshipp'd, will I offer up,  
As is my rule, petitions to my God,  
For thee, for me, for Solyma, for all!

ARASPES.

Oh, stay! what mean'st thou! sure thou  
hast not heard

The edict of the king? I thought but  
now,

Thou knew'st its purport. It expressly  
says,

That no petition henceforth shall be  
made,

For thirty days save only to the king;  
Nor pray'r nor intercession shall be  
heard

Of any God or man, but of Darius.

DANIEL.

And think'st thou then my reverence  
for the king,

Good as he is, shall tempt me to re-  
nounce

My sworn allegiance to the King of  
kings?

Hast thou commanded legions? strove  
in battle,

Defy'd the face of danger, mock'd at  
death

In all its frightful forms, and tremblest  
now?

Come learn of me; I'll teach thee to be  
bold,

Though sword I never drew! Fear not,  
Araspes,

The feeble vengeance of a mortal man,  
Whose breath is in his nostrils: for  
wherein

Is he to be accounted of? but fear

The awaken'd vengeance of the living  
Lord,

He who can plunge the everlasting soul  
In infinite perdition!

ARASPES.

Then, O Daniel!  
If thou persist to disobey the edict,  
Retire and hide thee from the prying  
eyes  
Of busy malice!

DANIEL.

He who is asham'd  
To vindicate the honour of his God,  
Of him the living Lord shall be asham'd  
When He shall judge the tribes!

ARASPES.

Yet, O remember,  
Oft have I heard thee say, the secret  
heart

Is fair devotion's temple; there the saint,  
E'en on that living altar, lights the  
flame

Of purest sacrifice, which burns un-  
seen,

Not unaccepted.—I remember, too,  
When Syrian Naaman\* by Elisha's hand,  
Was cleans'd from foul pollution, and  
his mind

Enlighten'd by the miracle, confess'd  
The Almighty God of Jacob: that he  
deem'd it

No flagrant violation of his faith  
To bend at Rimmon's shrine; nor did  
the seer

Forbid the rite external.

DANIEL.

Know, Araspes,  
Heav'n designs to suit our trials to our  
strength,

A recent convert, feeble in his faith:  
Naaman, perhaps, had sunk beneath the  
weight

Of so severe a duty. Gracious Heav'n  
Forbears to bruise the reed, or quench  
the flax

When feeble and expiring. But shall I,  
Shall Daniel, shall the servant of the  
Lord,

A vet'ran in his cause—long train'd to  
know

\*II Kings, chap. v.

And do His will—long exercis'd in wo,  
 Bred in captivity and born to suffer;  
 Shall I, from known, from certain duty  
   shrink  
 To shun a threaten'd danger? O,  
   Araspes!  
 Shall I, advanc'd in age, in zeal decline?  
 Grow careless as I reach my journey's  
   end  
 And slacken in my pace, the goal in  
   view?  
 Perish discretion, when it interferes  
 With duty! Perish the false policy  
 Of human wit, which would commute  
   our safety  
 With God's eternal honour! Shall His  
   law  
 Be set at nought, that I may live at  
   ease?  
 How would the Heathen triumph,  
   should I fall  
 Through coward fear! How would  
   God's enemies  
 Insultingly blaspheme!

ARASPES.

Yet, think a moment.

DANIEL.

No.  
 Where evil may be *done*, 'tis right to  
   ponder;  
 Where only *suffer'd* know the shortest  
   pause  
 Is much too long. Had great Darius  
   paus'd,  
 This ill had been prevented. But for  
   me,  
 Araspes, to deliberate is to sin.

ARASPES.

Think of thy pow'r, thy favour with  
   Darius:  
 Think of thy life's importance to the  
   tribes,  
 Scarce yet return'd in safety. Live!  
   O, live!  
 To serve the cause of God!

DANIEL.

God will Himself  
 Sustain His righteous cause. He knows  
   to raise

Fit instruments to serve Him. Know,  
   Araspes,  
 He does not need our crimes to help His  
   cause,  
 Nor does His equitable law permit  
 A sinful act, from the prepost'rous plea  
 That good may follow it. For me, my  
   friend,  
 The spacious earth holds not a bait to  
   tempt.  
 What would it profit me, if I should  
   gain  
 Imperial Ecbatan, th' extended land  
 Of fruitful Media, nay, the world's wide  
   empire,  
 If mine eternal soul must be the price?  
 Farewell, my friend! time presses. I  
   have stol'n  
 Some moments from my duty to con-  
   firm  
 And strengthen thy young faith! Let  
   us fulfil  
 What Heav'n enjoins, and leave to  
   Heav'n th' event!

## PART V.

SCENE—*The Palace.*

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

PHARNACES.

'Tis done—success has crown'd our  
   scheme, Soranus;  
 And Daniel falls into the deep-laid toils  
 Our prudence spread.

SORANUS.

That he should fall so soon,  
 Astonishes e'en me! what! not a day!  
 What! not a single moment to defer  
 His rash devotions? Madly thus to  
   rush  
 On certain peril quite transcends belief!  
 When happen'd it, Pharnaces?

PHARNACES.

On the instant:  
 Scarce is the deed accomplish'd. As he  
   made

His ostentatious pray'r, e'en in the face  
Of the bright god of day, all Babylon  
Beheld the insult offer'd to Darius.  
For, as in bold defiance of the law,  
His windows were not clos'd. Our  
chosen bands,  
Whom we had plac'd to note him,  
straight rush'd in,  
And seiz'd him in the warmth of his  
blind zeal,  
Ere half his pray'r was finish'd. Young  
Araspes,  
With all the wild extravagance of grief,  
Prays, weeps, and threatens. Daniel,  
silent stands,  
With patient resignation, and prepares  
To follow them.—But see, the king ap-  
proaches!

SORANUS.

How's this? deep sorrow sits upon his  
brow,  
And stern resentment fires his angry  
eye!

[Enter Darius.]

DARIUS.

O, deep-laid stratagem! O, artful wile!  
To take me unprepar'd, to wound my  
heart,  
E'en where it feels most tenderly, in  
friendship!  
To stab my fame! to hold me up a  
mark  
To future ages, for the perjur'd prince  
Who slew the friend he lov'd! O Daniel,  
Daniel,  
Who now shall trust Darius? Not a  
slave  
In my wide empire, from the Indian  
main  
To the cold Caspian, but is more at ease  
Than I, his monarch! Yes! I've done a  
deed  
Will blot my honour with eternal stain!  
Pharnaces! O, thou hoary sycophant!  
Thou wily politician! thou hast snar'd  
Thy unsuspecting master!

PHARNACES.

Great Darius,  
Let not resentment blind thy royal eyes.

In what am I to blame? who could sus-  
pect  
This obstinate resistance to the law?  
Who could foresee that Daniel would  
perforce  
Oppose the king's decree?

DARIUS.

Thou, thou foresaw'st it!  
Thou know'st his righteous soul would  
ne'er endure  
So long an interval of pray'r. But I,  
Deluded king! 'twas I should have fore-  
seen  
His steadfast piety. I should have  
thought  
Your earnest warmth had some more  
secret source,  
Something that touch'd you nearer than  
your love,  
Your well-feign'd zeal for me.—I should  
have known  
When selfish politicians, hackney'd long  
In fraud and artifice, affect a glow  
Of patriot fervour, or fond loyalty,  
Which scorns all show of interest, that's  
the moment  
To watch their crooked projects.—Well  
thou know'st  
How dear I held him; how I priz'd his  
truth.  
Did I not choose him from a subject  
world,  
Unbless'd by fortune, and by birth un-  
grac'd,  
A captive and a Jew? Did I not love  
him?  
Was he not rich in independent worth?  
And great in native goodness? That  
undid him!  
There, there he fell! If he had been  
less great,  
He had been safe. Thou could'st not  
bear his brightness;  
The lustre of his virtues quite obscur'd,  
And dimm'd thy fainter merit. Rash old  
man!  
Go, and devise some means to set me  
free  
From this dread load of guilt! Go  
set at work  
Thy plotting genius to redeem the life  
Of venerable Daniel!

PHARNACES.

'Tis too late.  
He has offended 'gainst the new de-  
cree;  
Has dared to make petition to his God,  
Although the dreadful sentence of the  
act  
Full well he knew. And by th' estab-  
lish'd law  
Of Media, by that irrevocable,  
Which he has dar'd to violate, he dies!

DARIUS.

Impiety! presumption! monstrous law!  
Irrevocable? Is there aught on earth  
Deserves that name? Th' eternal laws  
alone

Of Oromasdes are unchangeable!  
All human projects are so faintly fram'd,  
So feebly plann'd, so liable to change,  
So mix'd with error in their very form,  
That mutable and mortal are the same.  
But where is Daniel! Wherefore comes  
he not

To load me with reproaches? to upbraid  
me

With all the wrongs my barbarous haste  
has done him!

Where is he?

PHARNACES.

He prepares to meet his fate.  
This hour he dies, for the act so de-  
crees.

DARIUS.

Suspend the bloody sentence. Bring  
him hither.

Or rather let me seek him and implore  
His dying pardon, and his parting pray'r.

## PART VI.

SCENE—*Daniel's house.*

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

Still let me follow thee; still let me  
hear

The voice of Wisdom, ere the silver  
cord  
By death's cold hand be loosen'd.

DANIEL.

Now I'm ready!  
No grief, no woman's weakness, good  
Araspes  
Thou should'st rejoice my pilgrimage is  
o'er,  
And the blest heaven of repose in view.

ARASPES.

And must I lose thee, Daniel? must  
thou die?

DANIEL.

And what is death, my friend, that I  
should fear it?  
To die! why 'tis to triumph; 'tis to join  
The great assembly of the good and  
just;

Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets,  
saints!

Oh! 'tis to join the band of holy men,  
Made perfect by their sufferings! 'Tis  
to meet

My great progenitors! 'Tis to behold  
Th' illustrious patriarchs; they with  
whom the Lord

Deign'd hold familiar converse. 'Tis to  
see

Bless'd Noah and his children, once a  
world!

'Tis to behold, oh, rapture to conceive!  
Those we have known, and lov'd and  
lost below!

Bold Azariah, and the band of brothers,  
Who sought, in bloom of youth, the  
scorching flames!

Nor shall we see heroic men alone,  
Champions who fought the fight of faith  
on earth;

But heavenly conquerors, angelic hosts,  
Michael and his bright legions, who  
subdu'd

The foes of truth! To join their blest  
employ

Of love and praise! to the high melodies  
Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,  
Accordant to the golden harps of saints!  
To join in blest hosannahs to their  
King!



Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,  
 Alone were heaven, though saint or seraph none  
 Should meet our sight, and only God were there!  
 This is to die! Who would not die for this?  
 Who would not die, that he might live for ever?

DARIUS, DANIEL, ARASPES.

DARIUS.

Where is he? where is Daniel?—Let me see him!  
 Let me embrace that venerable form,  
 Which I have doom'd to glut the greedy maw  
 Of furious lions!

DANIEL.

King Darius, hail!

DARIUS.

O, injur'd Daniel, can I see thee thus!  
 Thus uncomplaining! can I bear to hear  
 That when the ruffian ministers of death  
 Stopp'd thy unfinish'd pray'r, thy pious lips  
 Had just invok'd a blessing on Darius,  
 On him who sought thy life? Thy murd'ers drop  
 Tears of strange pity. Look not on me thus  
 With mild benignity! O! I could bear  
 The voice of keen reproach, or the strong flash  
 Of fierce resentment; but I cannot stand  
 That touching silence, nor that patient eye  
 Of meek respect.

DANIEL.

Thou art my master still.

DARIUS.

I am thy murderer! I have sign'd thy death!

DANIEL.

I know thy bent of soul is honourable:  
 Thou hast been gracious still! Were it not so,  
 I would have met the appointment of high Heaven  
 With humble acquiescence; but to know  
 Thy will concurr'd not with thy servant's fate,  
 Adds joy to resignation.

DARIUS.

Here I swear  
 By him who sits enthron'd in yon bright sun,  
 Thy blood shall be aton'd! On these thy foes,  
 Thou shalt have ample vengeance.

DANIEL.

Hold, O king!  
 Vengeance is mine, th' eternal Lord hath said;  
 Myself will recompense with even hand,  
 The sinner for the sin. The wrath of man  
 Works not the righteousness of God!

DARIUS.

I had hop'd  
 We should have trod this busy stage together  
 A little longer, then have sunk to rest  
 In honourable age! Who now shall guide  
 My shatter'd bark in safety? who shall now  
 Direct me? O, unhappy state of kings!  
 'Tis well the robe of majesty is gay,  
 Or who would put it on? A crown! what is it?  
 It is to bear the miseries of a people!  
 To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,  
 And sink beneath a load of splendid care!  
 To have your best success ascrib'd to Fortune,  
 And Fortune's failures all ascrib'd to you!  
 It is to sit upon a joyless height,  
 To every blast of changing fate expos'd!



Too high for hope! too great for happiness!  
 For friendship too much fear'd! To all the joys  
 Of social freedom, and th' endearing charm  
 Of lib'ral interchange of soul unknown!  
 Fate meant me an exception to the rest,  
 And though a monarch, bless'd me with a friend;  
 And I—have murder'd him!

DANIEL.

My hour approaches;  
 Hate not my mem'ry, king: protect Araspes:  
 Encourage Cyrus in the holy work  
 Of building ruin'd Solyma. Farewell!

DARIUS.

With most religious strictness I'll fulfil  
 Thy last request. Araspes shall be next  
 My throne and heart. Farewell!

[*They embrace.*]

Hear, future kings!  
 Ye unborn rulers of the nation, hear!  
 Learn from my crime, from my misfortune learn,  
 Never to trust to weak or wicked hands,  
 That delegated pow'r which Oromasdes  
 Invests in monarchs for the public good.

## PART VII.

SCENE—*The court of the palace—The sun rising.*

DANIEL, ARASPES.

DARIUS.

Oh, good Araspes! what a night of horror!  
 To me the dawning day brings no return  
 Of cheerfulness or peace! No balmy sleep  
 Has seal'd these eyes, no nourishment  
 has past

These loathing lips, since Daniel's fate  
 was signed!  
 Hear what my fruitless penitence resolves—  
 That thirty days my rashness had decreed  
 The edict's force should last, I will devote  
 To mourning and repentance, fasting,  
 pray'r  
 And all due rites of grief. For thirty days  
 No pleasant sound of dulcimer or harp,  
 Sackbut or flute, or psaltery, shall charm  
 My ear, now dead to ev'ry note of joy!

ARASPES.

My grief can know no period!

DARIUS.

See that den!  
 There Daniel met the furious lion's rage!  
 There were the patient martyr's man-gled limbs  
 Torn piece-meal! Never hide thy tears,  
 Araspes,  
 'Tis virtuous sorrow, unalloy'd like mine,  
 By guilt and fell remorse! Let us approach:  
 Who knows but that dread Pow'r to whom he pray'd  
 So often and so fervently, has heard him!

[*He goes to the mouth of the den.*]

O Daniel, servant of the living God!  
 He whom thou hast serv'd so long, and lov'd so well,  
 From the devouring lions' famish'd jaws,  
 Can he deliver thee?

DANIEL [*from the bottom of the den*].

He can—He has!

DARIUS.

Methought I heard him speak!

ARASPES.

O, wond'rous force  
 Of strong imagination! were thy voice  
 Loud as the trumpet's blast, it could not  
 wake him  
 From that eternal sleep!

DANIEL [*in the den*].

Hail, king Darius!  
The God I serve has shut the lions'  
mouths,  
To vindicate my innocence.

DARIUS,

He speaks!

He lives!

ARASPES.

'Tis no illusion: 'tis the sound  
Of his known voice.

DARIUS,

Where are my servants? Haste,  
Fly, swift as lightning, free him from  
the den;

Release him, bring him hither! break  
the seal

Which keeps him from me! See, Aras-  
pes! look!

See the charm'd lions!—Mark their mild  
demeanor:

Araspes, mark!—they have no pow'r to  
hurt him!

See how they hang their heads and  
smooth their fierceness

At his mild aspect!

ARASPES.

Who that sees this sight,  
Who that in after times shall hear this  
told,

Can doubt if Daniel's God be God in-  
deed?

DARIUS.

None, none, Araspes!

ARASPES.

Ah, he comes, he comes!

[*Enter DANIEL, followed by multitudes.*]

DANIEL.

Hail, great Darius!

DARIUS.

Dost thou live indeed!  
And live unhurt?

ARASPES.

O, miracle of joy!

DARIUS.

I scarce can trust my eyes! How didst  
thou 'scape?

DANIEL.

That bright and glorious Being, who  
vouchsaf'd

Presence divine, when the three martyr'd  
brothers

Essay'd the caldron's flame, supported  
me!

E'en in the furious lions' dreadful den,  
The prisoner of hope, even there I turn'd  
To the strong hold, the bulwark of my  
strength,

Ready to hear, and mighty to redeem!

DARIUS [*to Araspes.*]

Where is Pharnaces? Take the hoary  
traitor!

Take, too, Soranus, and the chief abet-  
tors

Of this dire edict: let not one escape.  
The punishment their deep-laid hate de-  
vis'd

For holy Daniel, on their heads shall  
fall

With tenfold vengeance. To the lion's  
den

I doom his vile accusers! All their  
wives,

Their children, too, shall share one com-  
mon fate!

Take care that none escape—Go, good  
Araspes.

[*ARASPES goes out.*]

DANIEL.

Not so, Darius!  
O spare the guiltless; spare the guilty,  
too!

Where sin is not, to punish were un-  
just;

And where sin is, O king, there fell  
remorse  
Supplies the place of punishment!

DARIUS.

No more!

My word is past! Not one request, save  
this,  
Shalt thou e'er make in vain. Approach,  
my friends;  
Araspes has already spread the tale,  
And see what crowds advance!

PEOPLE.

Long live Darius!

Long live great Daniel, too, the people's  
friend!

DARIUS.

Draw near, my subjects. See this holy  
man!  
Death had no pow'r to harm him. Yon  
fell band  
Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,  
Forgot their nature, and grew tame be-  
fore him.  
The mighty God protects his servants  
thus!  
The righteous thus he rescues from the  
snare,  
While Fraud's artificer himself shall fall  
In the deep gulf his wily arts devise  
To snare the innocent!

A COURTIER.

To the same den  
Araspes bears Pharnaces and his  
friends:  
Fallen is their insolence! With prayers  
and tears  
And all the meanness of high-crested  
pride,  
When adverse fortune frowns, they beg  
for life.  
Araspes will not hear. "You heard not  
me,"  
He cries, "When I for Daniel's life im-  
plor'd;  
His God protected him! see now if  
yours  
Will listen to your cries!"

DARIUS.

Now hear,

People and nations, languages and  
realms,  
O'er whom I rule! Peace be within  
your walls!  
That I may banish from the minds of  
men  
The rash decree gone out; hear me  
resolve  
To counteract its force by one more  
just.  
In ev'ry kingdom of my wide-stretch'd  
realm  
From fair Chaldea to the extremest  
bound  
Of northern Media, be my edict sent,  
And this my statute known. My her-  
alds haste,  
And spread my royal mandate through  
the land,  
That all my subjects bow the ready knee  
To Daniel's GOD—for HE alone is LORD.  
Let all adore, and tremble at His name,  
Who sits in glory unapproachable  
Above the heavens—above the heaven of  
heavens!  
His pow'r is everlasting; and His  
throne,  
Founded in equity and truth, shall last  
Beyond the bounded reign of time and  
space  
Through wide eternity! With His right  
arm  
He saves, and who opposes? He de-  
fends,  
And who shall injure? In the perilous  
den  
He rescu'd Daniel from the lions'  
mouths;  
His common deeds are wonders; all His  
works  
One ever-during chain of miracles!

[Enter Araspes.]

ARASPES.

All hail, O king! Darius, live for ever!  
May all thy foes be as Pharnaces is!

DARIUS.

Araspes, speak!

ARASPES.

O, let me spare the tale!—  
'Tis full of horror! Dreadful was the  
sight!  
The hungry lions, greedy for their prey,  
Devour'd the wretched princes ere they  
reach'd  
The bottom of the den.

DARIUS.

Now, now confess  
'Twas some superior hand restrain'd  
their rage,  
And tam'd their furious appetites.

PEOPLE.

'Tis true.  
The God of Daniel is a mighty God!  
He saves and He destroys.

ARASPES.

O, friend! O, Daniel!  
No wav'ring doubts can ever more dis-  
turb  
My settled faith.

DANIEL.

To God be all the glory!

HANNAH MORE.  
(1745-1833.)



JUDAS MACCABAEUS  
EXTRACTS





# JUDAS MACCABAEUS

[EXTRACTS.]

## ACT I.

*The Citadel of Antiochus at Jerusalem.*

SCENE I.—ANTIOCHUS; JASON.

ANTIOCHUS. O Antioch, my Antioch,  
my city!  
Queen of the East! my solace, my delight!  
The dowry of my sister Cleopatra  
When she was wed to Ptolemy, and  
now  
Won back and made more wonderful  
by me!

I love thee, and I long to be once more  
Among the players and the dancing  
women  
Within thy gates, and bathe in the  
Orontes,  
Thy river and mine. O Jason, my High-  
Priest,

For I have made thee so, and thou art  
mine,

Hast thou seen Antioch the Beautiful?  
JASON. Never, my Lord.

ANTIOCHUS. Then hast thou never  
seen  
The wonder of the world. This city of  
David

Compared with Antioch is but a village,  
And its inhabitants compared with  
Greeks

Are mannerless boors.

JASON. They are barbarians,  
And mannerless.

ANTIOCHUS. They must be civilized.  
They must be made to have more gods  
than one;

And goddesses besides.

JASON. They shall have more.

ANTIOCHUS. They must have hippo-  
dromes, and games, and baths,  
Stage-plays and festivals, and most of  
all

The Dionysia.

JASON. They shall have them all.

ANTIOCHUS. By Heracles! but I should  
like to see

These Hebrews crowned with ivy, and  
arrayed

In skins of fawns, with drums and  
flutes and thyrsi,

Revel and riot through the solemn  
streets

Of their old town. Ha, ha! It makes  
me merry

Only to think of it!—Thou does not  
laugh.

JASON. Yea, I laugh inwardly.

ANTIOCHUS. The new Greek leaven  
Works slowly in this Israelitish dough!  
Have I not sacked the Temple, and on  
the altar

Set up the statue of Olympian Zeus  
To Hellenize it?

JASON. Thou hast done all this.

ANTIOCHUS. As thou wast Joshua once  
and now art Jason,  
And from a Hebrew hast become a  
Greek,

So shall this Hebrew nation be trans-  
lated,

Their very natures and their names be  
changed,

And all be Hellenized.

JASON. It shall be done.

ANTIOCHUS. Their manners and their  
laws and way of living  
Shall all be Greek. They shall unlearn  
their language,

And learn the lovely speech of Antioch.  
Where hast thou been to-day? Thou  
comest late.

JASON. Playing at discus with the  
other priests

In the Gymnasium.

ANTIOCHUS. Thou hast done well.  
There's nothing better for you lazy  
priests

Than discus-playing with the common people.

Now tell me, Jason, what these Hebrews call me

When they converse together at their games.

JASON. Antiochus Epiphanes, my Lord;

Antiochus the Illustrious.

ANTIOCHUS. O, not that; That is the public cry; I mean the name

They give me when they talk among themselves,

And think that no one listens; what is that?

JASON. Antiochus Epimanes, my Lord!

ANTIOCHUS. Antiochus the Mad!

Ay, that is it.

And who hath said it? Who hath set in motion

That sorry jest?

JASON. The Seven Sons insane Of a weird woman, like themselves insane.

ANTIOCHUS. I like their courage, but it shall not save them.

They shall be made to eat the flesh of swine,

Or they shall die. Where are they?

JASON. In the dungeons Beneath this tower.

ANTIOCHUS. There let them stay and starve,

Till I am ready to make Greeks of them,

After my fashion.

JASON. They shall stay and starve.— My Lord, the Ambassadors of Samaria Await thy pleasure.

ANTIOCHUS. Why not my displeasure? Ambassadors are tedious. They are men

Who work for their own ends, and not for mine;

There is no furtherance in them. Let them go

To Apollonius, my governor

There in Samaria, and not trouble me. What do they want?

JASON. Only the royal sanction

To give a name unto a nameless temple Upon Mount Gerizim.

ANTIOCHUS. Then bid them enter. This pleases me, and furthers my designs.

The occasion is auspicious. Bid them enter.

## ACT II.

### *The Dungeons in the Citadel.*

#### SCENE I.—THE MOTHER of the SEVEN SONS alone, listening.

THE MOTHER. Be strong, my heart! Break not till they are dead.

All, all my Seven Sons; then burst asunder,

And let this tortured and tormented soul

Leap and rush out like water through the shards

Of earthen vessels broken at a well. O my dear children, mine in life and death,

I know not how ye came into my womb;

I neither gave you breath, nor gave you life,

And neither was it I that formed the members

Of every one of you. But the Creator, Who made the world, and made the heavens above us,

Who formed the generations of mankind,

And found out the beginning of all things,

He gave you breath and life, and will again

Of his own mercy, as ye now regard Not your own selves, but his eternal law.

I do not murmur, nay, I thank thee, God,

That I and mine have not been deemed unworthy

To suffer for thy sake, and for thy law, And for the many sins of Israel.

Hark! I can hear within the sound of scourges!

I feel them more than ye do, O my sons! But cannot come to you. I, who was wont

To wake at night at the least cry ye made,

To whom ye ran at every slightest hurt,—

I cannot take you now into my lap  
And soothe your pain, but God will  
take you all  
Into his pitying arms, and comfort you,  
And give you rest.

A VOICE (*within*). What wouldst  
thou ask of us?

Ready are we to die, but we will never  
Transgress the law and customs of our  
fathers.

THE MOTHER. It is the voice of my  
first-born. O brave  
And noble boy! Thou hast the privilege

Of dying first, as thou wast born the  
first.

THE SAME VOICE (*within*). God look-  
eth on us, and hath comfort in us;  
As Moses in his song of old declared,  
He in His servants shall be comforted.

THE MOTHER. I knew thou wouldst  
not fail!—He speaks no more,  
He is beyond all pain!

ANTIOCHUS (*within*). If thou eat not  
Thou shalt be tortured throughout all  
the members

Of thy whole body. Wilt thou eat then?  
SECOND VOICE (*within*). No.

THE MOTHER. It is Adaiah's voice. I  
tremble for him.

I know his nature, devious as the wind,  
And swift to change, gentle and yield-  
ing always.

Be steadfast, O my son!

THE SAME VOICE (*within*). Thou,  
like a fury,

Takest us from this present life, but  
God,

Who rules the world, shall raise us up  
again

Into life everlasting.

THE MOTHER. God, I thank thee  
That thou hast breathed into that timid  
heart

Courage to die for thee. O my Adaiah,  
Witness of God! if thou for whom I  
feared

Canst thou encounter death, I need not  
fear;

The others will not shrink.

THIRD VOICE (*within*). Behold these  
hands

Held out to thee, O King Antiochus,  
Not to implore thy mercy, but to show

That I despise them. He who gave  
them to me

Will give them back again.

THE MOTHER. O Avilan,  
It is thy voice. For the last time I  
hear it;

For the last time on earth, but not the  
last.

To death it bids defiance and to torture.  
It sounds to me as from another world,  
And makes the petty miseries of this  
Seem unto me as naught, and less than  
naught.

Farewell, my Avilan; nay, I should  
say

Welcome, my Avilan; for I am dead  
Before thee. I am waiting for the  
others.

Why do they linger?

FOURTH VOICE (*within*). It is good,  
O King,

Being put to death by men, to look for  
hope

From God, to be raised up again by  
him.

But thou—no resurrection shalt thou  
have

To life hereafter.

THE MOTHER. Four! already four!  
Three are still living; nay, they all are  
living,

Half here, half there. Make haste,  
Antiochus,

To reunite us; for the sword that  
cleaves

These miserable bodies makes a door  
Through which our souls, impatient of  
release,

Rush to each other's arms.

FIFTH VOICE (*within*). Thou hast the  
power;

Thou doest what thou wilt. Abide  
awhile,

And thou shalt see the power of God,  
and how

He will torment thee and thy seed.

THE MOTHER. O hasten;  
Why dost thou pause? Thou who hast  
slain already

So many Hebrew women, and hast hung  
Their murdered infants round their  
necks, slay me,

For I too am a woman, and these boys  
Are mine. Make haste to slay us all,

And hang my lifeless babes about my  
neck.

SIXTH VOICE (*within*). Think not,  
Antiochus, that takest in hand  
To strive against the God of Israel,  
Thou shalt escape unpunished, for his  
wrath  
Shall overtake thee and thy bloody  
house.

THE MOTHER. One more, my Sirion,  
and then all is ended.  
Having put all to bed, then in my turn  
I will lie down and sleep as sound as  
they.

My Sirion, my youngest, best beloved!  
And those bright golden locks, that I  
so oft

Have curled about these fingers, even  
now

Are foul with blood and dust, like a  
lamb's fleece,  
Slain in the shambles.—Not a sound I  
hear.

This silence is more terrible to me  
Than any sound, than any cry of pain,  
That might escape the lips of one who  
dies.

Doth his heart fail him? Doth he fall  
away

In the last hour from God? O Sirion,  
Sirion,

Art thou afraid? I do not hear thy  
voice.

Die as thy brothers died. Thou must  
not live!

### ACT III.

SCENE IV.—JUDAS MACCABAEUS; CAP-  
TAINS *and* SOLDIERS.

JUDAS. The hour is come. Gather  
the host together  
For battle. Lo, with trumpets and with  
songs

The army of Nicanor comes against us.  
Go forth to meet them, praying in your  
hearts,

And fighting with your hands.

CAPTAINS. Look forth and see!  
The morning sun is shining on their  
shields

Of gold and brass; the mountains glis-  
ten with them,

And shine like lamps. And we who  
are so few

And poorly armed, and ready to faint  
with fasting,

How shall we fight against this multi-  
tude?

JUDAS. The victory of a battle stand-  
eth not

In multitudes, but in the strength that  
cometh

From heaven above. The Lord forbid  
that I

Should do this thing, and flee away  
from them.

Nay, if our hour be come, then let us  
die;

Let us not stain our honor.

CAPTAINS. 'T is the Sabbath.

Wilt thou fight on the Sabbath, Mac-  
cabæus?

JUDAS. Ay; when I fight the battles  
of the Lord,

I fight them on His day, as on all  
others.

Have ye forgotten certain fugitives  
That fled once to these hills, and hid  
themselves

In caves? How their pursuers camped  
against them

Upon the Seventh Day, and challenged  
them?

And how they answered not, nor cast  
a stone,

Nor stopped the places where they lay  
concealed,

But meekly perished with their wives  
and children.

Even to the number of a thousand  
souls?

We who are fighting for our laws and  
lives

Will not so perish.

CAPTAINS. Lead us to the battle!

JUDAS. And let our watchword be,  
"The Help of God!"

Last night I dreamed a dream; and in  
my vision

Beheld Onias, our High-Priest of old,  
Who holding up his hands prayed for  
the Jews.

This done, in the like manner there  
appeared

An old man, and exceeding glorious,  
With hoarv hair, and of a wonderful  
And excellent majesty. And Onias  
said:

"This is a lover of the Jews, who  
prayeth

Much for the people and the Holy  
City,—

God's Prophet Jeremias." And the prophet  
Held forth his right hand and gave unto me  
A sword of gold; and giving it he said:  
"Take thou this holy sword, a gift from God,  
And with it thou shalt wound thine adversaries."

CAPTAINS. The Lord is with us!

JUDAS. Hark! I hear the trumpets

Sound from Beth-horon; from the battle-field

Of Joshua, where he smote the Amorites,

Smote the Five Kings of Eglon and of Jarmuth,

Of Hebron, Lachish, and Jerusalem,  
As we today will smite Nicanor's hosts,  
And leave a memory of great deeds behind us.

CAPTAINS and SOLDIERS. The Help of God!

JUDAS. *Be Elohim Yehovah!*

Lord, thou didst send thine Angel in the time

Of Ezekias, King of Israel,  
And in the armies of Sennacherib

Didst slay a hundred fourscore and five thousand.

Wherefore, O Lord of heaven, now also send

Before us a good angel for a fear,  
And through the might of thy right arm,

let those  
Be stricken with terror that have come this day

Against thy holy people to blaspheme!

#### ACT IV.

SCENE III.—JASON, *alone*.

JASON. Through the Gate Beautiful  
I see them come

With branches and green boughs and leaves of palm,

And pass into the inner courts. Alas!  
I should be with them, should be one of them,

But in an evil hour, an hour of weakness,

That cometh unto all, I fell away  
From the old faith, and did not clutch

the new,

Only an outward semblance of belief;  
For the new faith I cannot make mine own,

Not being born to it. It hath no root  
Within me. I am neither Jew nor Greek,  
But stand between them both, a renegade

To each in turn; having no longer faith  
In gods or men. Then what mysterious charm,

What fascination is it chains my feet,  
And keeps me gazing like a curious child

Into the holy places, where the priests  
Have raised their altar?—Striking stones together,

They take fire out of them, and light the lamps

In the great candlestick. They spread the veils,

And set the loaves of shrewbread on the table.

The incense burns; the well-remembered odor

Comes wafted unto me, and takes me back

To other days. I see myself among them

As I was then; and the old superstition  
Creeps over me again!—A childish fancy!—

And hark! they sing with citherns and with cymbals

And all the people fall upon their faces,  
Praying and worshipping!—I will away

Into the East to meet Antiochus  
Upon his homeward journey crowned with triumph.

Alas! today I would give everything  
To see a friend's face or to hear a voice

That had the slightest tone of comfort in it!

#### ACT V.

SCENE II.—ANTIOCHUS; PHILIP, *a messenger*.

PHILIP (*reading*). "We pray thee  
hasten thy return. The realm

Is falling from thee. Since thou hast gone from us

The victories of Judas Maccabæus



Form all our annals. First he over-  
threw

Thy forces at Beth-horon and passed  
on,

And took Jerusalem, the Holy City.

And then Emmaus fell; and then  
Bethsura;

Ephron and all the towns of Galaad,  
And Maccabæus marched to Carnion."

ANTIOCHUS. Enough, enough! Go  
call my chariot-man;

We will drive forward, forward without  
ceasing,

Until we come to Antioch. My cap-  
tains,

My Lysias, Gorgias, Seron, and Nica-  
nor,

Are babes in battle, and this dreadful  
Jew

Will rob me of my kingdom and my  
crown.

My elephants shall trample him to dust;  
I will wipe out his nation, and will  
make

Jerusalem a common burying-place,  
And every home within its walls a  
tomb!

*(Throws up his hands, and sinks into  
the arms of attendants, who lay him  
upon a bank.)*

PHILIP. Antiochus! Antiochus!  
Alas!

The King is ill! What is it, O my  
Lord?

ANTIOCHUS. Nothing. A sudden and  
sharp spasm of pain,

As if the lightning struck me, or the  
knife

Of an assassin smote me to the heart.

'T is passed, even as it came. Let us  
set forward.

PHILIP. See that the chariots be in  
readiness;

We will depart forthwith.

ANTIOCHUS. A moment more.  
I cannot stand. I am become at once

Weak as an infant. Ye will have to  
lead me.

Jove or Jehovah, or whatever name

Thou wouldst be named,—it is alike to  
me,—

If I knew how to pray, I would entreat  
To live a little longer.

PHILIP. O my Lord,  
Thou shalt not die; we will not let thee  
die!

ANTIOCHUS. How canst thou help  
it, Philip? O the pain!

Stab after stab. Thou hast no shield  
against

This unseen weapon. God of Israel,  
Since all the other gods abandon me,  
Help me. I will release the Holy City,  
Garnish with goodly gifts the Holy  
Temple.

Thy people, whom I judged to be un-  
worthy

To be so much as buried, shall be equal  
Unto the citizens of Antioch.

I will become a Jew, and will declare  
Through all the world that is inhabited  
The power of God!

PHILIP. He faints. It is like death.  
Bring here the royal litter. We will  
bear him

Into the camp, while yet he lives  
ANTIOCHUS. O Philip,

Into what tribulation am I come!

Alas! I now remember all the evil  
That I have done the Jews; and for  
this cause

These troubles are upon me, and be-  
hold

I perish through great grief in a strange  
land.

PHILIP. Antiochus! my King!

ANTIOCHUS. Nay, King no longer.  
Take thou my royal robes, my signet-  
ring,

My crown and sceptre, and deliver  
them

Unto my son, Antiochus Eupator;

And unto the good Jews, my citizens,

In all my towns, say that their dying  
monarch

Wisheth them joy, prosperity, and  
health.

I who puffed up with pride and arro-  
gance,

Thought all the kingdoms of the earth  
mine own,

If I would but outstretch my hand and  
take them,

Meet face to face a greater potentate,

King Death—Epiphanes—the illu-  
trious! *(Dies.)*

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(1807-1882).

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM  
A DRAMATIC POEM  
[ABRIDGED]



# THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

*A Dramatic Poem.*  
[Abridged.]

## CHARACTERS.

### *Romans.*

TITUS.  
CAIUS PLACIDUS.  
TIBERIUS ALEXANDER.  
TERENTIUS RUFUS.  
DIAGORAS, *a Stoic philosopher.*  
JOSEPH (*the Historian*) *with the Roman army.*  
*Soldiers, etc.*

### *Jews in the City.*

SIMON, *the Assassin.*  
JOHN, *the Tyrant.*  
ELEAZAR, *the Zealot.*  
AMARIAH, *son of John.*  
The HIGH-PRIEST.  
BEN CATHLA, *leader of the Edomites.*  
AARON, *a Levite.*  
ABIRAM, *a false Prophet.*  
*Many Jews.*  
JAVAN, *a Christian, by birth a Jew.*  
MIRIAM and SALONE, *daughters of Simon.*

## THE HOUSE OF SIMON— BREAK OF DAY.

### SIMON.

The air is still and cool. It comes not yet:  
I thought that I had felt it in my sleep  
Weighing upon my choked and labouring breast,  
That did rejoice beneath the stern oppression;

I thought I saw its lurid gloom o'er-spreading  
The starless waning night. But yet it comes not,  
The broad and sultry thundercloud, wherein  
The God of Israel evermore pavilions  
The chariot of his vengeance. I look out,  
And still, as I have seen, morn after morn,  
The hills of Judah flash upon my sight  
The accursed radiance of the Gentile arms.  
But oh! ye sky-descending ministers,  
That on invisible and noiseless wing  
Stoop to your earthly purposes, as swift  
As rushing fire, and terrible as the wind  
That sweeps the tentless desert—Ye that move  
Shrouded in secrecy as in a robe,  
And gloom of deepest midnight the vaunt-courier  
Of your dread presence! Will ye not reveal?  
Will ye not one compassionate glimpse vouchsafe,  
By what dark instruments 'tis now your charge  
To save the Holy City?—Lord of Israel!  
Thee too I ask, with bold yet holy awe,  
Which now of thy obsequious elements  
Choosest thou for thy champion and thy combatant?  
For well they know, the wide and deluging Waters,  
The ravenous Fire, and the plague-breathing Air,  
Yea, and the yawning and wide-chasmed Earth,  
They know thy bidding, by fix'd habit bound

To the usage of obedience. Or the  
rather,  
Look we in weary yet undaunted hope  
For Him that is to come, the Mighty  
Arm,  
The Wearer of the purple robe of  
vengeance,  
The Crowned with dominion? Let him  
haste;  
The wine-press waits the trampling of  
his wrath,  
And Judah yearns t'unfurl the Lion  
banner  
Before the terrible radiance of his  
coming.

SIMON, JOHN, ELEAZAR, *the* HIGH-  
PRIEST, AMARIAH, ETC., ETC.

JOHN.

How, Simon! have we broken on thy  
privacy!  
Thou wert discoursing with the spirits  
of air.  
Now, Eleazar, were not holy Simon  
The just, the merciful, the righteous  
Simon,  
A vessel meet for the prophetic trance?  
Methinks 'tis on him now!

SIMON.

Ha! John of Galilee,  
Still in the taunting vein? Reserv'st  
thou not  
The bitter overflowings of thy lips  
For yon fierce Gentiles?—But I will en-  
dure.

JOHN.

And then perchance 'twill please the  
saintly Simon,  
When he hath mumbled o'er his two-  
hour prayers,  
That we do ope our gates, and sally  
forth  
To combat the uncircumcised—

SIMON.

Thy scoffs  
Fall on me as the thin and scattering  
rain  
Upon our Temple. If thou art here to  
urge

That, with confederate valiant resolu-  
tion,  
We burst upon the enemies of Jerusa-  
lem;  
The thunder followeth not the light-  
ning's flash  
More swiftly than my warlike execu-  
tion  
Shall follow the fierce trumpet of thy  
wrath!

JOHN.

But hast thou ponder'd well, if still  
there be not  
Some holy fast, new moon, or rigid  
sabbath,  
Which may excuse a tame and cow-  
ard peace  
For one day longer to your men of  
Edom?

HIGH-PRIEST.

Oh! 'tis unwise, ye sworded delegates  
Of Him who watcheth o'er Jerusalem,  
Thus day by day in angry quarrel  
meeting  
To glare upon each other, and to waste  
In civil strife the blood that might pre-  
serve us.  
The Roman conquers, but by Jewish  
arms.  
The torrent, that in one broad chan-  
nel rolling  
Bears down the labour'd obstacles of  
man,  
The o'erstriding bridge, the fix'd and  
ponderous dam,  
Being sever'd, in its lazy separate  
course  
Suffers control, and stagnates to its  
end.  
And so ye fall, because ye do disdain  
To stand together—like the pines of  
Lebanon,  
That when in one vast wood they  
crown the hill,  
From their proud heads shake off the  
uninjuring tempest;  
But when their single trunks stand  
bare and naked  
Before the rushing whirlwind, one by  
one  
It hurls the uprooted trunks into the  
vale.

ELEAZAR (*apart.*)

Curse on his words of peace! fall John,  
fall Simon,  
There falls an enemy of Eleazar.

SIMON.

Now, John of Galilee, the High-Priest  
speaks wisely.

JOHN.

Why, ay, it is the privilege of their  
office,  
The solemn grave distinction of their  
ephod.  
Even such discourse as this, so calm,  
so sage,  
Did old Mathias hold; and therefore  
Simon,  
Unwilling that the vantage of his wis-  
dom  
Should rob our valour of its boasted  
fame,  
Did slay him with his sons upon our  
wall!

SIMON.

Peace, son of Belial! or I'll scourge thee  
back  
To the harlot chambers of thy loose  
adulteries.  
I slew my foe, and where's the armed  
man  
That will behold his enemy at his feet,  
And spare to set his foot upon his  
neck?  
The sword was given, and shall the  
sword not slay?—

HIGH-PRIEST.

Break off! break off! I hear the Gen-  
tile horn  
Winding along the wide entrenched  
line.  
Hear ye it not? hill answers hill, the  
valleys  
In their deep channels lengthen out the  
sound.  
It rushes down Jehoshaphat, the depths  
Of Hinnom answer. Hark! again they  
blow,

Chiding you, men of Judah, and insult-  
ing

Your bare and vacant walls, that now  
oppose not

Their firm array of javelin-hurling  
men,

Slingers, and pourers of the liquid fire.

AMARIAH.

Blow! Blow! and rend the heavens,  
thou deep-voiced horn!

I hear thee, and rejoice at thee. Thou  
summoner

To the storm of battle, thou that dost  
invite

With stern and welcome importunity  
The warrior soul to that high festival,  
Where Valour with his armed hand ad-  
ministers

The cup of death!

JOHN.

Again, again it sounds;  
It doth demand a parley with our  
chiefs.

AMARIAH.

Ay, father! and let Israel's chiefs re-  
ply

In the brave language of their javelin  
showers,

And shouts of furious onset.

JOHN.

Hold, hot boy!  
That know'st not the deep luxury of  
scorn.

We'll meet them, Simon, but to scoff  
at them;

We'll dally with their hopes of base  
surrender,

Then mock them, till their haughty  
captain writhe

Beneath the keen and biting contumely.

Now, Eleazar, lead the way; brave  
Simon,

I follow thee—Come. men of Israel,  
come.



## THE WALLS OF THE CITY.

*Below*—TITUS, the Roman Army, JOSEPH of Jotapata, &c.

*Above*—SIMON, JOHN, ELEAZAR, AMARIAH, Jews.

## TITUS.

Men of Jerusalem! whose hardy zeal  
And valiant patience in a cause less  
desperate  
Might force the foe to reverence and  
admire;  
To you thus speaks again the Queen of  
Earth,  
All-conquering Rome!—whose king-  
dom is, where'er  
The sunshine beams on living men; be-  
neath  
The shadow of whose throne the world  
reposes,  
And glories in being subjected to her,  
Even as 'tis subject to the immortal  
gods—  
To you, whose mad and mutinous re-  
volt  
Hath harrow'd all your rich and pleas-  
ant land  
With fiery rapine; sunk your lofty  
cities  
To desolate heaps of monumental  
ashes;  
Yet with that patience, which becomes  
the mighty,  
The endurance of the lion, that dis-  
dains  
The foe whose conquest bears no glory  
with it,  
Rome doth command you to lay down  
your arms,  
And bow the high front of your proud  
rebellion  
Even to the common level of obedi-  
ence,  
That holds the rest of humankind. So  
doing,  
Ye cancel all the dark and guilty past:  
Silent Oblivion waits to wipe away  
The record of your madness and your  
crimes;  
And in the stead of bloody Vengeance  
claiming  
Her penal due of torture, chains, and  
death,  
Comes reconciling Mercy.

## JOHN.

Mercy! Roman!

With what a humble and a modest  
truth  
Thou dost commend thy unassuming  
virtues.  
Ye want not testimonies to your mild-  
ness—  
There, on yon lofty crosses, which  
surround us,  
Each with a Jewish corpse sublimely  
rotting  
On its most honourable eminence;  
There's none in all that long and ghast-  
ly avenue  
Whose wind-bleach'd bones depose not  
of thy mercy.  
We know our brethren, and we thank  
thee too;  
A courteous welcome hast thou given  
them, Roman,  
Who have abandon'd us in the hour of  
peril.  
They fled to 'scape their ruthless coun-  
trymen;  
And, in good truth, their City of Ref-  
uge seems  
To have found them fair and gentle  
entertainment.

## SIMON.

Peace, John of Galilee! and I will an-  
swer  
This purple-mantled Captain of the  
Gentiles;  
But in far other tone than he is wont  
To hear about his silken couch of  
feasting  
Amid his pamper'd parasites.—I speak  
to thee,  
Titus, as warrior should accost a war-  
rior.  
The world, thou boastest, is Rome's  
slave; the sun  
Rises and sets upon no realm but  
yours;  
Ye plant your giant foot in either  
ocean,  
And vaunt that all which ye o'erstride  
is Rome's.  
But think ye, that because the com-  
mon earth  
Surfeits your pride with homage, that  
our land,

Our separate, peculiar, sacred land,  
 Portion'd and seal'd unto us by the  
     God  
 Who made the round world and the  
     crystal heavens;  
 A wondrous land, where Nature's  
     common course  
 Is strange and out of use, so oft the  
     Lord  
 Invades it with miraculous interven-  
     tion;  
 Think ye this land shall be an Heathen  
     heritage,  
 An high place for your Moloch?  
     Haughty Gentile!  
 Even now ye walk on ruin and on  
     prodigy.  
 The air ye breathe is heavy and o'er-  
     charged  
 With your dark gathering doom; and  
     if our earth  
 Do yet in its disdain endure the foot-  
     ing  
 Of your arm'd regions, 'tis because it  
     labours  
 With silent throes of expectation, wait-  
     ing  
 The signal of your scattering. Lo!  
     the mountains  
 Bend o'er you with their huge and  
     lowering shadows,  
 Ready to rush and overwhelm: the  
     winds  
 Do listen panting for the tardy pres-  
     ence  
 Of Him that shall avenge. And there  
     is scorn,  
 Yea, there is laughter in our fathers'  
     tombs,  
 To think that Heathen conqueror doth  
     aspire  
 To lord it over God's Jerusalem!  
 Yea, in Hell's deep and desolate abode,  
 Where dwell the perish'd kings, the  
     chief of earth;  
 They whose idolatrous warfare erst  
     assail'd  
 The Holy City, and the chosen people;  
 They wait for thee, the associate of  
     their hopes  
 And fatal fall, to join their ruin'd con-  
     clave.  
 He whom the Red Sea 'whelm'd with  
     all his host,

Pharaoh, the Egyptian; and the kings  
     of Canaan;  
 The Philistine, the Dagon worshipper;  
 Moab, and Edom, and fierce Amalek;  
 And he of Babylon, whose multitudes,  
 Even on the hills where gleam your  
     myriad spears,  
 In one brief night the invisible Angel  
     swept  
 With the dark, noiseless shadow of his  
     wing,  
 And morn beheld the fierce and riot-  
     ous camp  
 One cold, and mute, and tombless ceme-  
     tery,  
 Sennacherib: all, all are risen, are  
     moved;  
 Yea, they take up the taunting song of  
     welcome  
 To him who, like themselves, hath  
     madly warr'd  
 'Gainst Zion's walls, and miserably  
     fallen  
 Before the avenging God of Israel!

## THE JEWS.

Oh, holy Simon! Oh, prophetic Simon  
 Lead thou, lead thou against the Gen-  
     tile host,  
 And we will ask no angel breath to  
     blast them.  
 The valour of her children soon shall  
     scatter  
 The spoiler from the rescued walls of  
     Salem,  
 Even till the wolves of Palestine are  
     glutted.  
 With Roman carnage.

## AMARIAH.

Blow, ye sacred priests,  
 Your trumpets, as when Jericho of old  
 Cast down its prostrate walls at  
     Joshua's feet!

## PLACIDUS.

Let the Jew speak, the captive of  
     Jotapata;  
 Haply they'll reverence one, and him  
     the bravest  
 Of their own kindred.

TERENTIUS.

See! he speaks to them;  
And they do listen, though their men-  
acing brows  
Lower with a darker and more furious  
hate.

JOSEPH.

Yet, yet a little while—ye see me rise,  
Oh, men of Israel, brethren, country-  
men!  
Even from the earth ye see me rise,  
where lone,  
And sorrowful, and fasting, I have  
sate  
These three long days; sad sackcloth  
on the limbs  
Which once were wont to wear a sol-  
dier's raiment,  
And ashes on the head, which ye of  
old  
Did honour, when its helméd glories  
shone  
Before you in the paths of battle. Hear  
me,  
Ye that, as I, adore the Law, the  
Prophets;  
And at the ineffable thrice-holiest name  
Bow down your awe-struck foreheads  
to the ground.  
I am not here to tell you, men of Israel,  
That it is madness to contend with  
Rome;  
That it were wisdom to submit and  
follow  
The common fortunes of the universe;  
For ye would answer, that 'tis glori-  
ous madness  
To stand alone amid the enslaved  
world  
Freedom's last desperate champions: ye  
would answer,  
That the slave's wisdom to the free-  
born man  
Is basest folly. Oh, my countrymen!  
Before no earthly king do I command  
you  
To fall subservient, not all-conquering  
Caesar,  
But in a mightier name I summon you,  
The King of Kings! He, he is mani-  
fest  
In the dark visitation that is on you.

'Tis He, whose loosed and raging  
ministers,  
Wild War, gaunt Famine, leprous Pes-  
tilence,  
But execute his delegated wrath.  
Yea, by the fulness of your crimes, 'tis  
He.

Alas! shall I weep o'er thee, or go  
down  
And grovel in the dust, and hide my-  
self  
From mine own shame? Oh, thou de-  
filed Jerusalem!  
That drinkest thine own blood as from  
a fountain;  
That hast piled up the fabric of thy  
guilt  
To such portentous height, that earth  
is darken'd  
With its huge shadow—that dost boast  
the monuments  
Of murder'd prophets, and dost make  
the robes  
Of God's High-priest a title and a  
claim  
To bloodiest slaughter—thou that every  
day  
Dost trample down the thunder-given  
Law,  
Even 'with the pride and joy of him  
that treads  
The purple vintage—And oh thou, our  
Temple!  
That wert of old the Beauty of Holi-  
ness,  
The chosen, unapproachable abode  
Of Him which dwelt between the  
cherubim,  
Thou art a charnel-house, and sepul-  
chre  
Of slaughter'd men, a common butchery  
Of civil strife;—and hence proclaim I,  
brethren,  
It is the Lord who doth avenge his  
own:  
The Lord, who gives you over to the  
wicked,  
That ye may perish by their wicked-  
ness.  
Oh! ye that do disdain to be Rome's  
slaves,  
And yet are sold unto a baser bondage,  
One that, like iron, eats into your  
souls.

Robbers, and Zealots, and wild Edom-ites!

Yea, these are they that sit in Moses' seat,

Wield Joshua's sword, and fill the throne of David;

Yea, these are they—

AMARIAH.

I'll hear no more—the foe  
Claims from our lips the privilege of  
reply.

Here is our answer to the renegade,  
A javelin to his pale and coward  
heart!

JOSEPH.

I am struck, but not to death! that yet  
is wanting  
To Israel's guilt.

JEWS.

Oh, noble Amariah!  
Well hast thou spoken! well hast thou  
replied!

Lead — lead — we'll follow noble  
Amariah!

TITUS.

Now, Mercy, to the winds! I cast thee  
off—

My soul's forbidden luxury, I abjure  
thee!

Thou much-abused attribute of gods  
And godlike men. 'Twas nature's final  
struggle;

And now, whate'er thou art, thou un-  
seen prompter!

That in the secret chambers of my soul  
Darkly abidest, and hast still rebuked  
The soft compunctious weakness of  
mine heart,

I here surrender thee myself. Now  
wield me

Thine instrument of havoc and of hor-  
ror,

Thine to the extremest limits of re-  
venge;

Till not a single stone of yon proud  
city

Remain; and even the vestiges of ruin  
Be utterly blotted from the face of  
earth!

## STREETS OF JERUSALEM NEAR THE INNER WALL.

MIRIAM, SALONE.

MIRIAM.

Sweet sister, whither in such haste?

SALONE.

And know'st thou not  
My customary seat, where I look down  
And see the glorious battle deepen  
round me?

Oh! it is spirit-stirring to behold  
The crimson garments waving in the  
dust,

The eagles glancing in the clouded sun-  
shine.

MIRIAM.

Salone! in this dark and solemn hour,  
Were it not wiser that the weak and  
helpless,

Bearing their portion in the common  
danger,

Should join their feeble efforts to de-  
fend—

Should be upon their knees in fervent  
prayer

Unto the Lord of Battles?

SALONE.

Yes; I know  
That 'Zion's daughters are set forth to  
lead

Their suppliant procession to the gates  
Of the Holy Temple. But Salone goes  
Where she may see the God whom they  
adore

In the stern deeds of valiant men, that  
war

To save that Temple from the dust.

Behold!

I mount my throne, and here I sit the  
queen

Of the majestic tumult that beneath me  
Is maddening into conflicts. Lo! I  
bind

My dark locks, that they spread not  
o'er my sight.

Now flash the bright sun from your  
gleaming arms,  
Shake it in broad sheets from your  
banner folds,  
Mine eyes will still endure the blaze,  
and pierce  
The thickest!

MIRIAM.

And thou hast no tears to blind thee?

SALONE.

Behold! behold! from Olivet they pour,  
Thousands on thousands, in their mar-  
tial order.

Kedron's dark valley, like Gennesareth,  
When over it the cold moon shines  
through storms,

Topping its dark waves with uncertain  
light,

Is tossing with wild plumes and gleam-  
ing spears.

Solemnly the stern lictors move, and  
brandish

Their rod-bound axes; and the eagles  
seem,

With wings dispread, to watch their  
time for swooping!

The towers are moving on; and lo!  
the engines,

As though instinct with life, come  
heavily labouring

Upon their ponderous wheels; they nod  
destruction

Against our walls. Lo! lo, our gates  
fly open:

There Eleazar—there the mighty John—  
Ben Cathla there, and Edom's crested  
sons.

Oh! what a blaze of glory gathers  
round them!

How proudly move they in invincible  
strength!

MIRIAM.

And thou canst speak thus with a  
steadfast voice,

When in one hour may death have laid  
in the dust

Those breathing, moving, valiant mul-  
titudes?

SALONE.

And thou! oh thou, that movest to the  
battle

Even like the mountain stag to the  
running river,

Pause, pause, that I may gaze my fill!—

MIRIAM.

Our father!

Salone! is't our father that thou seest?

SALONE.

Lo! lo! the war hath broken off to ad-  
mire him!

The glory of his presence awes the  
conflict!

The son of Caesar on his arméd steed  
Rises, impatient of the pluméd helms

That from his sight conceal young  
Amariah.

MIRIAM.

Alas! what means she? Hear me yet  
a word!

I will return or e'er the wounded men  
Require our soft and healing hands to  
soothe them.

Thou'lt not forget, Salone—if thou  
seest

Our father in the fearful hour of peril,  
Lift up thy hands and pray.

SALONE.

It is like gazing on the morning sun,  
When he comes scattering from his  
burning orb

The vaporish clouds!

MIRIAM.

She hears, she heeds me not.  
And here's a sight and sound to me  
more welcome

Than the wild fray of men who slay  
and die—

Our maidens on their way to the Holy  
Temple.

I'll mingle with them, and I'll pray  
with them;

But through a name, by them unknown  
or scorn'd,

My prayers shall mount to heaven.

Behold them here!



Behold them, how unlike to what they were!

Oh! virgin daughters of Jerusalem!  
Ye were a garden once of Hermon's

lilies,  
That bashfully upon their tremulous stems

Bow to the wooing breath of the sweet spring.

Graceful ye were! there needed not the tone

Of tabret, harp, or lute, to modulate  
Your soft harmonious footsteps; your light tread

Fell like a natural music. Ah! how deeply

Hath the cold blight of misery prey'd upon you.

How heavily ye drag your weary footsteps,

Each like a mother mourning her one child.

Ah me! I feel it almost as a sin,  
To be so much less sad, less miserable.

#### CHORUS.

King of Kings! and Lord of Lords!

Thus we move, our sad steps timing  
To our cymbals' feeblest chiming,  
Where thy House its rest accords.  
Chased and wounded birds are we,  
Through the dark air fled to thee;  
To the shadow of thy wings,  
Lord of Lords! and King of Kings!

Behold, oh Lord! the Heathen tread

The branches of thy fruitful vine,  
That its luxurious tendrils spread  
O'er all the hills of Palestine.

And now the wild boar comes to waste  
Even us, the greenest boughs and last,  
That, drinking of thy choicest dew,  
On Zion's hill in beauty grew.

No! by the marvels of thine hand,  
Thou still wilt save thy chosen land!  
By all thine ancient mercies shown,  
By all our fathers' foes o'erthrown;  
By the Egyptian's car-borne host,  
Scatter'd on the Red Sea coast;  
By that wide and bloodless slaughter  
Underneath the drowning water.

Like us in utter helplessness,  
In their last and worst distress—  
On the sand and sea-weed lying,  
Israel pour'd her doleful sighing;  
While before the deep sea flow'd,  
And behind fierce Egypt rode—  
To their fathers' God they pray'd,  
To the Lord of Hosts for aid.

On the margin of the flood  
With lifted rod the Prophet stood;  
And the summon'd east wind blew,  
And aside it sternly threw  
The gather'd waves, that took their stand,  
Like crystal rocks, one either hand,  
Or walls of sea-green marble piled  
Round some irregular city wild.

Then the light of morning lay  
On the wonder-paved way,  
Where the treasures of the deep  
In their caves of coral sleep.  
The profound abysses, where  
Was never sound from upper air,  
Rang with Israel's chanted words,  
King of Kings! and Lord of Lords!

Then with bow and banner glancing,  
On exulting Egypt came,  
With her chosen horsemen prancing,  
And her cars on wheels of flame,  
In a rich and boastful ring  
All around her furious king.

But the Lord from out his cloud,  
The Lord look'd down upon the proud;  
And the host drave heavily  
Down the deep bosom of the sea.

With a quick and sudden swell  
Prone the liquid ramparts fell;  
Over horse, and over car,  
Over every man of war,  
Over Pharaoh's crown of gold,  
The loud thundering billows roll'd.  
As the level waters spread  
Down they sank, they sank like lead,  
Down sank without a cry or groan.  
And the morning sun, that shone  
On myriads of bright-armed men,  
Its meridian radiance then  
Cast on a wide sea, heaving as of yore,  
Against a silent, solitary shore.



Then did Israel's maidens sing,  
 Then did Israel's timbrels ring,  
 To Him, the King of Kings! that in the  
 sea,  
 The Lord of Lords! had triumph'd glo-  
 riously.

And our timbrels' flashing chords,  
 King of Kings! and Lord of Lords!  
 Shall they not attuned be  
 Once again to victory?  
 Lo! a glorious triumph now!  
 Lo! against thy people come  
 A mightier Pharaoh! wilt not thou  
 Craze the chariot wheels of Rome?  
 Will not like the Red Sea wave,  
 Thy stern anger overthrow?  
 And from worse than bondage save,  
 From sadder than Egyptian woe,  
 Those whose silver cymbals glance,  
 Those who lead the suppliant dance,  
 Thy race, the only race that sings  
 Lord of Lords! and King of Kings!

#### STREETS OF JERUSALEM— EVENING.

MIRIAM.

Ah me! ungentle Eve, how long thou  
 lingerest!  
 Oh! when it was a grief to me to lose  
 Yon azure mountains, and the lovely  
 valès  
 That from our city walls seem wan-  
 dering on  
 Under the cedar-tufted precipices;  
 With what an envious and a hurrying  
 swiftness  
 Didst thou descend, and pour thy  
 mantling dews  
 And dew-like silence o'er the face of  
 things;  
 Shrouding each spot I loved the most  
 with suddenest  
 And deepest darkness; making mute the  
 groves  
 Where the birds nestled under the still  
 leaves!  
 But now how slowly, heavily thou fall-  
 est!  
 Now when thou mightest hush the an-  
 gry din  
 Of battle, and conceal the murderous  
 foes

From mutual slaughter, and pour oil  
 and wine  
 Into the aching hurts of wounded men!  
 But is it therefore only that I chide  
 thee  
 With querulous impatience? will the  
 night  
 Once more, the secret, counsel-keeping  
 night,  
 Veil the dark path which leads to Si-  
 loe's fountain?  
 Which leads—why should I blush to  
 add—to Javan?  
 Oh thou, my teacher! I forgot thee  
 not  
 This morning in the Temple—I forgot  
 not  
 The name thou taught'st me to adore,  
 nor thee—  
 But what have I to do with thoughts  
 like these,  
 While all around the stunning battle  
 roars  
 Like a gorged lion o'er his mangled  
 prey?  
 Alas! alas! but the human appetite  
 For shedding blood,—that is insatiate!  
 —Time was that if I heard a sound of  
 arms,  
 My heart would shudder, and my limbs  
 would fail.  
 When, to have seen a dying man had  
 been  
 A dark event, that with its fearful  
 memory  
 Had haunted many a sad and sleepless  
 night.  
 But now—now—

SALONE, MIRIAM.

MIRIAM.

Sister! my Salone! Sister!  
 Why art thou flying with that frantic  
 mien,  
 Thy veil cast back and streaming with  
 thine hair?  
 Oh, harbinger of misery! I read  
 A sad disastrous story in thy face;  
 'Tis o'er, and God hath given the city  
 of David  
 Unto the stranger.

SALONE.

Oh! not yet; our wall,  
Our last, our strongest wall, is still un-  
shaken,  
Though the fierce engines with their  
brazen heads  
Strike at it sternly and incessantly.

MIRIAM.

Then God preserve the lost! and oh,  
our father!

SALONE.

All is not lost! for Amariah stands  
Amid the rushing sheets of molten fire,  
Even like an Angel in the flaming cen-  
tre

Of the sun's noontide orb—  
Hark, hark!—who comes?

SIMON.

Back—back—I say, by—

MIRIAM.

'Tis my father's voice!  
It sounds in wrath, perhaps in blas-  
phemy;  
Yet 'tis my living father's voice—He's  
here.

SIMON, MIRIAM, SALONE.

SIMON.

Now may your native towers rush o'er  
your heads  
With horrible downfall, may the treach-  
erous stones  
Start underneath your footing, cast you  
down,  
For the iron wheels of vengeance to  
rush o'er you—  
Flight! flight! still flight!—Oh, infidel  
renegades!

*The above,* JOHN, AMARIAH, HIGH-  
PRIEST, &c.

SIMON.

Now, by the living God of Israel,  
John!

Your silken slaves, your golden-san-  
dal'd men,—

Your men! I should have said, your  
girls of Galilee!—

They will not soil their dainty hands  
with blood.

Their myrrh-dew'd locks are all too  
smoothly curl'd

To let the riotous and dishevelling airs  
Of battle violate their crisp'd neatness.  
Oh! their nice mincing steps are all un-  
fit

To tread the red and slippery paths of  
war;

Yet they can trip it lightly when they  
turn

To fly—

JOHN.

Thou lying and injurious Pharisee!  
For every man of thine that in the  
trenches

Hardly hath consented to lay down his  
life,

Twice ten of mine have leap'd from  
off the walls,

Grappling a Gentile by the shivering  
helm,

And proudly died upon his dying foe.  
But tell thou me, thou only faithful  
Simon!

Where are the men of Edom, whom we  
saw

Stretching their amicable hands in par-  
ley,

And quietly mingling with the unharm-  
ing foe?

SIMON.

Where are they? where the traitors  
meet, where all

The foes of Simon and Jerusalem,  
In th' everlasting fire! I slew them,

John,—

Thou saw'st my red hand glorious with  
their blood.

JOHN.

False traitors! in their very treachery  
false!

They would betray without their lord—  
In truth,

Treason, like empire, brooks not  
rivalry.

SIMON.

Now, by the bones of Abraham our father,  
 I do accuse thee here, false John of Galilee!  
 Or, if the title please thee, John the Tyrant!  
 Here, in our arm'd, embattled Sanhedrim,  
 Thou art our fall's prime cause, and fatal origin!  
 From thee, as from a foul and poisonous fount,  
 Pour the black waters of calamity  
 O'er Judah's land! God hates thee, man of Belial!  
 And the destroying bolts that fall on thee  
 From the insulted heavens, blast all around thee  
 With spacious and unsparing desolation.  
 Hear me, ye men of Israel! do ye wonder  
 That all your baffled valour hath recoil'd  
 From the fierce Gentile onset? that your walls  
 Are prostrate, and your last hath scarce repell'd  
 But now the flush'd invader? 'Tis from this—  
 That the Holy City will not be defended  
 By womanish men, and loose adulterers.  
 Hear me, I say, this son of Gischala,  
 This lustful tyrant, hath he not defiled  
 Your daughters, in the open face of day  
 Done deeds of shame, which midnight hath no darkness  
 So deep as to conceal? It is his pride  
 T' offend high heaven with crimes before unknown—  
 Hath he not mock'd the austere and solemn fasts,  
 And sabbaths of our Law, by revellings  
 And most heaven-tainting wantonness?  
 Yea, more,  
 Hath he not made God's festivals a false  
 And fraudulent pretext for his deeds of guilt?

Yea, on the day of the Unleaven'd Bread,  
 Even in the garb and with the speech of worship,  
 Went he not up into the very Temple?  
 And there before the Veil, even in the presence  
 Of th' Holy of Holies, did he not break forth  
 With armed and infuriate violence?  
 Then did the pavement, which was never red  
 But with the guiltless blood of sacrifice,  
 Reek with the indelible and thrice-foul-est stain  
 Of human carnage. Yea, with impious steel  
 He slew the brethren that were kneeling with him  
 At the same altar, uttering the same prayers.  
 (Speak, Eleazar, was't not so?—thou dar'st not  
 Affirm, nor canst deny thine own betrayal.)  
 And since that curséd hour of guilty triumph  
 There hath he held the palace of his lusts,  
 Turning God's Temple to a grove of Belial:  
 Even till men wonder that the pillars start not  
 From their fix'd sockets; that the offended roof  
 Fall not at once, and crush in his own shame  
 The blasphemous invader. Yea, not yet,  
 I have not fathom'd yet his depth of sin.  
 His common banquet is the Bread of Offering,  
 The vessels of the altar are the cups  
 From which he drains his riotous drunkenness.  
 The incense, that was wont to rise to heaven  
 Pure as an infant's breath, now foully stagnates  
 Within the pestilent haunts of his lasciviousness.  
 Can these things be, and yet our favour'd arms  
 Be clad with victory? Can the Lord of Israel

For us, the scanty remnant of his worshippers,  
Neglect to vindicate his tainted shrine,  
His sanctuary profaned, his outraged  
Laws?

JOHN.

Methinks, if Simon had but fought to-day  
As valiantly as Simon speaks, the foe  
Had never seen to-morrow's onset—

SIMON.

Brethren,

Yet I demand your audience—

JEWS.

Hear him! hear

The righteous Simon!

SIMON.

Men of Israel!

Why stand ye thus in wonder? where  
the root

Is hollow, can the tree be sound?  
Man's deeds

Are as man's doctrines; and who hopes  
for ought

But wantonness and foul iniquity  
From that blaspheming and heretical  
sect,

The serpent spawn of Sadoc, that corrupt

The Law of Moses and disdain the  
the Prophets?

That grossly do defraud the eternal  
soul

Of its immortal heritage, and doom it  
To rot for ever with its kindred clay

In the grave's deep unbroken prison-  
house?

Yea, they dispeople with their infidel  
creed

Heaven of its holy Angels; laugh to  
scorn

That secret band of ministering Spirits;  
That therefore, in their indignation,  
stand

Aloof, and gaze upon our gathering ruin  
With a contemptuous and pitiless scorn.

They that were wont to range around  
our towers

Their sunlight-wing'd battalia, and to  
war

Upon our part with adamantine arms.

JOHN.

Oh! impotent and miserable arguer!  
Will he that values not the stake as  
boldly

Confront the peril as the man that feels  
His all upon the hazard? Men of Galilee,

The cup of life hath sparkled to our  
lips,

And we have drain'd its tide of love  
and joy,

Till our veins almost burst with o'er-  
wrought rapture.

And well we know that generous cup,  
once dash'd,

Shall never mantle more to the cold  
lips

Of the earth-bound dead. And there-  
fore do we fight

For life as for a mistress, that being  
lost,

Is lost for ever. To be what we are  
Is all we hope or pray for; think ye,  
then,

That we shall tamely yield the contest  
up,

And calmly acquiesce in our extinction?  
We know that there stands yawning at  
our feet

The gulf, where dark Annihilation  
dwells

With Solitude, her sister; and we fix  
Our stedfast footing on the perilous  
verge,

And grapple to the last with the fierce  
foe

That seeks to plunge us down; and  
where's the strength

That can subdue despair?—For the  
other charge,

We look not, Simon, to the sky, nor  
pray

For sightless and impalpable messen-  
gers

To spare us the proud peril of the war.  
Ourselves are our own Angels! we im-  
plore not

Or supernatural or spiritual aid;  
We have our own good arms, that God  
hath given us,

And valiant hearts to wield those  
mighty arms.

SIMON.

Oh heavens! oh heavens, ye hear it,  
and endure it!  
Outwearied by the all-frequent blas-  
phemy  
To an indignant patience: and the just  
Still, still must suffer the enforced al-  
liance  
Of men whose fellowship is death and  
ruin.

JOHN.

Why, thou acknowledged Prince of  
Murderers!  
Captain Assassin! Lord and Chief of  
Massacre!  
That pourest blood like water, yet dost  
deem  
That thou canst wash the foul and scar-  
let stain  
From thy polluted soul, as easily  
As from thy dainty ever-dabbling  
hands,  
That wouldst appease with rite and or-  
dinance,  
And festival, and slavish ceremony,  
And prayers that weary even the stones  
thou kneel'st on,  
The God whose image hourly thou ef-  
facest  
With mangling and remorseless steel!  
'Tis well  
That graves are silent, and that dead  
men's bones  
Assert not the proud privilege thou  
wouldst give them;  
For if they did, Heaven's vaults would  
ring so loudly  
With imprecations 'gainst the right-  
eous Simon,  
That they would pluck by force a  
plague upon us,  
To which the Roman, and the wasting  
famine,  
Were soft and healing mercies.

SIMON.

Liar and slave!  
There is no rich libation to the All-  
Just  
So welcome as the blood of renegades  
And traitors—

MIRIAM (*apart*).

Oh! I dare not listen longer!  
The big drops stand upon his brow;  
his voice  
Is faint and fails, and there's no food  
at home.  
The night is dark—I'll go once more,  
or perish.

[*Departs unperceived.*]

SIMON.

What, John of Galilee! because my  
voice  
Is hoarse with speaking of thy crimes,  
dost scoff,  
And wag thy head at me, and answer  
laughter?  
Now, if thy veins run not pure gall,  
I'll broach  
Their tide, and prove if all my creed  
be false;  
If traitor's reeking blood smell not to  
heaven  
Like a sweet sacrifice.

JOHN.

Why, ay! the victim  
Is bound to th' horns of th' altar!  
Strike, I say,  
He waits thee—Strike!

HIGH-PRIEST.

Hold, Chiefs of Israel!  
Just Simon! valiant John! once more  
I dare  
To cast myself between you, the High-  
Priest,  
Who by his holy office calls on you  
To throw aside your trivial private  
wrongs,  
And vindicate offense more rank and  
monstrous.  
Avenge your God! and then avenge  
yourselves!  
The Temple is polluted—Israel's Lord  
Mock'd in his presence. Prayers even  
thence have risen,  
Prayers from the jealous holy Sanctu-  
ary,  
Even to the Crucified Man our fathers  
slew.



## JEWS.

The Crucified! the Man of Nazareth!

## HIGH-PRIEST.

This morn, as wont, our maidens had  
gone up

To' chant their suppliant hymn; and  
they had raised

The song that Israel on the Red Sea  
shore

Took up triumphant; and they clos'd  
the strain,

That, like th' Egyptian and his car-  
borne host,

The billows of Heaven's wrath might  
overwhelm

The Gentile foe, and so preserve Jeru-  
salem;

When at the close and fall a single  
voice

Linger'd upon the note, with "Be it  
done,

Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son."  
My spirit shrank within me; horror-

struck,  
I listen'd; all was silence! Then again

I look'd upon the veiled damsels, all  
With one accord took up the swelling

strain  
To him that triumph'd gloriously. I

turn'd  
To the Ark and Mercy Seat, and then

again  
I heard that single, soft, melodious

voice,  
"Lord of Mercies be it done,

Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son."  
Here, then assembled Lords of Israel,

Whoever be the victim, I demand her;  
Your wisdom must detect, your justice

wreak  
Fit punishment upon the accursed sac-  
rilege.

SALONE (*apart*).

Miriam! Miriam! Ha!—She's fled.—  
Guilt! Guilt

Prophetic of the damning accusation  
It doth deserve! Apostate! 'twere a

sin  
Against Jerusalem and Heaven to spare  
thee!

## HIGH-PRIEST.

I do commend you, brethren, for your  
silence!

I see the abhorrence labouring in your  
hearts,

Too deep and too infuriate for words.

## SIMON.

Now, if it were my child, my Sarah's  
child,

The child that she died blessing, I'd  
not sleep

Till the stones crush her. Yea, thus,  
thus I'd grasp,

And hurl destruction on her guilty  
head.

Here, John, I pledge mine hand to thee,  
till vengeance

Seize on the false and insolent blas-  
phemer.

(*SALONE, half unveiled, rushing for-  
ward, stops irresolutely.*)

Their eyes oppress me—my heart chokes  
my voice—

And my lips' cling together—Oh! my  
mother,

Upon thy death-bed didst thou not be-  
seech us

To love each other!

## HIGH-PRIEST.

Veiled maid, what art thou?

## SALONE.

Off! off! the blood of Abraham swells  
within me—

As I cast down my veil, I cast away  
All fear, all tenderness, all fond re-  
morse.

It is too good a death for one so guilty  
To perish for Jerusalem—

[*She stands unveiled.*]

## SIMON.

Salone!

## HIGH-PRIEST.

The admired daughter of the noble  
Simon!



VOICE AT A DISTANCE.

Israel! Israel!

HIGH-PRIEST.

Who is this that speaks  
With such a shrilling accent of command?

VOICE.

Israel! Israel!

JEWS.

Back! give place! the Prophet!

ABIRAM (*the false prophet*).

Israel! Israel!

HIGH-PRIEST.

Peace!

ABIRAM.

Ay! peace, I say!  
The wounds are bound; the blood is  
stanch'd! and hate  
Is turn'd to love! and rancorous jealousy  
To kindred concord! and the clashing  
swords  
To bridal sounds! the fury of the feud  
To revel and the jocund nuptial feast.

HIGH-PRIEST.

What means Abiram?

ABIRAM.

It is from on High.  
Brave Amariah, son of John! Salone,  
Daughter of Simon! thus I join their  
hands;  
And thus I bless the wedded and the  
beautiful!  
And thus I bind the Captains of Jerusalem  
In the strong bonds of unity and  
peace.—

And where is now the wine for the  
bridegroom's rosy cup?

And the tabret and the harp for the  
chamber of the bride?

Lo! bright as burnish'd gold the lamps  
are sparkling up,

And the odours of the incense are  
breathing far and wide;

And the maidens' feet are glancing in  
the virgins' wedding train;

And the sad streets of Salem are alive  
with joy again!

THE JEWS.

Long live Salone! Long live Amariah!

SALONE.

Am I awake?—how came I here un-  
veil'd

Among the bold and glaring eyes of  
men?

THE JEWS.

Long live Salone! Long live Amariah!

SIMON.

He speaks from Heaven—accept'st  
thou, John of Galilee,  
Heaven's terms of peace?

JOHN.

From earth or heaven, I care not—  
What says my boy?

AMARIAH.

Oh! rather let me ask,  
What says the maid? Oh! raven-hair'd  
Salone,

Why dost thou crowd thy jealous veil  
around thee?

Look on me freely; beauteous in thy  
freedom;

As when this morn I saw thee, on our  
walls,

Thy hair cast back, and bare thy mar-  
ble brow

To the bright wooing of the enamour'd  
sun:

They were my banner, Beauty, those  
dark locks;

And in the battle 'twas my pride, my strength,  
To think that eyes like thine were gazing on me.

SALONE.

Oh no, thou saw'st me not!—Oh, Amariah!  
What Prophets speak must be fulfill'd.  
'Twere vain  
T' oppose at once the will of Heaven—and thee.

JOHN.

Now, if there be enough of generous food,  
A cup of wine in all the wasted city,  
We'll have a jocund revel.

SIMON.

Prophet Abiram,  
I have a question for thy secret ear.  
Thou man, whose eyes are purged from earthly film,  
Seest thou no further down the tide of time  
Beyond this bridal nothing?—Answer me!  
For it should seem this designated union  
Of two so noble, this conspiring blood  
Of Israel's chiefs, portends some glorious fruit  
To ripen in the deep futurity.

ABIRAM.

Simon, what meanest thou?

SIMON.

The Hope of Israel!  
Shall it not dawn from darkness? Oh! begot  
In Judah's hour of peril, and conceived  
In her extreme of agony, what birth  
So meet and fitting for the great Discomfiter?

ABIRAM.

A light falls on me.

SIMON.

Prophet! what shall dye  
The robe of purple with so bright a grain  
As Roman blood? Before our gates are met  
The lords of empire, and our walls may laugh  
Their siege to scorn, even till the BRANCH be grown  
That's not yet planted—Yea, the wrested scepter  
Of earth, the sole dominion—Back, Abiram,  
To thy prophetic cave—kneel, pray, fast, weep;  
And thou shalt bless us with far nobler tidings,  
And we will kiss thy feet, thou Harbinger  
Of Judah's glory—  
Now lead on the Bridal.  
Blow trumpets! shout, exulting Israel!  
Shout Amariah! shout again Salone!  
Shout louder yet, the Bridegroom and the Bride!  
Rejoice, oh Zion, now on all thy hills!  
City of David, through thy streets rejoice!

FOUNTAIN OF SILOE—NIGHT—  
AN APPROACHING STORM.

MIRIAM.

He is not here! and yet he might have known  
That the cold gloom of the tempestuous skies  
Could never change a faithful heart like mine.  
He might have known me, not a maid to love  
Under the melting moonlight, and soft stars,  
And to fall off in darkness and in storm.  
Ah! seal'd for ever be my slanderous lips!  
Alas! it is the bitterest pang of misery  
That it will force from us unworthy doubts  
Of the most tried and true. Oh, Javan, Javan!  
It was but now that with presumptuous heart

I did repine against the all-gracious  
 heavens,  
 That wrapt me round in charitable dark-  
 ness,  
 Because my erring feet had well-nigh  
 miss'd  
 Their known familiar path.

JAVAN, MIRIAM.

JAVAN.

What's there? I see  
 A white and spirit-like gleaming—It  
 must be!  
 I see her not, yet feel that it is Miriam,  
 By the indistinct and dimly visible grace  
 That haunts her motions; by her tread,  
 that falls  
 Trembling and soft like moonlight on  
 the earth.  
 What dost thou here? now—now?  
 where every moment  
 The soldiers prowl, and meeting sen-  
 tinels  
 Challenge each other? I have watch'd  
 for thee  
 As prisoners for the hour of their de-  
 liverance;  
 Yet did I pray, love! that thou might'st  
 not come,  
 Even that thou might'st be faithless  
 to thy vows,  
 Rather than meet this peril—Miriam,  
 Why art thou here?

MIRIAM.

Does Javan ask me why?  
 Because I saw my father pine with hun-  
 ger—  
 Because—I never hope to come again.

JAVAN.

Too true! this night, this fatal night, if  
 Heaven  
 Strike not their conquering host, the foe  
 achieves  
 His tardy victory. Round the shatter'd  
 walls  
 There is the smother'd hum of prepara-  
 tion.  
 With stealthy footsteps, and with muf-  
 fled arms,

Along the trenches, round the lowering  
 engines,  
 I saw them gathering: men stood whis-  
 pering men,  
 As though revealing some portentous  
 secret;  
 At every sound cried, Hist! and look'd  
 reproachfully  
 Upon each other. Now and then a light  
 From some far part of the encircling  
 camp  
 Breaks suddenly out, and then is  
 quench'd as suddenly.  
 The forced unnatural quiet, that per-  
 vades  
 Those myriads of arm'd and sleepless  
 warriors,  
 Presages earthly tempest; as yon clouds,  
 That in their mute and ponderous black-  
 ness hang  
 Over our heads, a tumult in the skies—  
 The earth and heaven alike are terribly  
 calm.

MIRIAM.

Alas! alas! give me the food! let's say  
 Farewell as fondly as a dying man  
 Should say it to a dying woman!

JAVAN.

Miriam!

It shall not be. *He, He* hath given  
 command,  
 That when the signs are manifest, we  
 should flee  
 Unto the mountains.\*

MIRIAM.

Javan, tempt me not.  
 My soul is weak. Hast thou not said of  
 old,  
 How dangerous 'tis to wrest the words  
 of truth  
 To the excusing our own fond desires?  
 There's an eternal mandate, unrepeal'd,  
 Nor e'er to be rescinded, "Love thy Fa-  
 ther!"  
 God speaks with many voices; one in  
 the heart,  
 True though instinctive; one in the  
 Holy Law,  
 The first that's coupled with a gracious  
 promise.

\*Matt. xxiv. 16.

JAVAN.

Yet are his words, "Leave all, and follow me,  
 "Thou shalt not love thy father more than me"—\*  
 Dar'st disobey them?

MIRIAM.

Javan, while I tread  
 The path of duty I am following him,  
 And loving whom I ought to love, love him.

JAVAN.

If thou couldst save or succour—if this night  
 Were not the last—

MIRIAM.

Oh, dearest, think awhile!  
 It matters little at what hour o' the day  
 The righteous falls asleep, death cannot come  
 To him untimely who is fit to die:  
 The less of this cold world, the more of heaven,  
 The briefer life, the earlier immortality.  
 But every moment to the man of guilt  
 And bloodshed, one like—ah me! like my father,  
 Each instant rescued from the grasp of death,  
 May be a blessed chosen opportunity  
 For the everlasting mercy—Think what 'tis  
 For time's minutest period to delay  
 An infidel's death, a murderer's—

JAVAN.

Go! go, dearest!,  
 If I were dying, I would have thee go—  
 Oh! thou inspher'd, unearthly loveliness!  
 Danger may gather round thee, like the clouds  
 Round one of heaven's pure stars,  
 thou'lt hold within  
 Thy course unsullied.

\*Matt. x. 7.

MIRIAM.

This is worse than all!  
 Oh! mock not thus with wild extravagant praise  
 A very weak and most unworthy girl.  
 Javan, one last, one parting word with thee—  
 There have been times, when I have said light words,  
 As maidens use, that made thy kind heart bleed;  
 There have been moments, when I have seen thee sad,  
 And I have cruelly sported with thy sadness:  
 I have been proud, oh! very proud, to hear  
 Thy fond lips dwell on beauty, when thine eyes  
 Were on this thin and wasted form of mine.  
 Forgive me, oh! forgive me, for I deem'd  
 The hour would surely come, when the fond bride  
 Might well repay the maiden's waywardness.  
 Oh! look not thus o'erjoy'd, for if I thought  
 We e'er could meet again this side the grave,  
 Trust me, I had been charier of my tenderness.  
 Yet one word more—I do mistrust thee, Javan,  
 Though coldly thou dost labour to conceal it;  
 Thou hast some frantic scheme to risk for mine  
 Thy precious life—Beseech thee, heap not thou  
 More sorrows on the o'erburthen'd.

JAVAN.

Think'st thou, then,  
 I have no trust but in this arm of flesh  
 To save thee?

MIRIAM.

Oh, kind Javan! pray not thou  
 That I may live, that is too wild a prayer;

That I may die unspotted, be thy suit  
To Him who loves the spotless.

JAVAN.

Ha—the thought!  
It pierces like a sword into my heart!

MIRIAM.

And think'st thou mine unwounded?—  
Fare thee well!  
Our presence does but rack each other's  
souls.  
Farewell! and if thou lovest when I am  
dead,  
May she be to thee, all I hoped to be.

JAVAN.

Go—go—

MIRIAM.

Thou bidst me part, and yet de-  
tain'st me  
With clinging grasp—ah no, 'tis I clasp  
thee.  
I knew not that my fond unconscious  
hand  
Had been so bold—Oh, Javan! ere the  
morn  
'Twill have no power t' offend thee—  
'twill be cold.

JAVAN.

Offend me! Miriam, when thou'rt above  
Among the Saints, and I in the sinful  
world,  
How terrible 'twill be if I should forfeit  
The hope of meeting thee in blessed-  
ness.

MIRIAM.

Forfeit! with faith like thine?

JAVAN.

Thou well rebukest me.  
To thy Redeemer I commit thee now,  
To leave thee here, or take thee to him-  
self.  
Farewell, farewell! the life of this sad  
heart,—

Dearer than life — I look for thee,  
and lo!

Nought but blind darkness—

Save where yon mad city,  
As though at peace and in luxurious  
joy,  
Is hanging out her bright and festive  
lamps.

There have been tears from holier  
eyes than mine  
Pour'd o'er thee, Zion! yea, the Son of  
Man  
This thy devoted hour foresaw and  
wept.  
And I—can I refrain from weeping?  
Yes,  
My country, in thy darker destiny  
Will I awhile forget mine own distress.

I feel it now, the sad, the coming hour;  
The signs are, full, and never shall  
the sun  
Shine on the cedar roofs of Salem  
more;  
Her tale of splendor now is told and  
done:  
Her wine-cup of festivity is spilt,  
And all is o'er, her grandeur and her  
guilt.

Oh! fair and favour'd city, where of old  
The balmy airs were rich with mel-  
ody,  
That led her pomp beneath the cloud-  
less sky  
In vestments flaming with the orient  
gold;  
Her gold is dim, and mute her music's  
voice,  
The Heathen o'er her perish'd pomp  
rejoice.

How stately then was every palm-deck'd  
street,  
Down which the maidens danced with  
tinkling feet;  
How proud the elders in the lofty  
gate!  
How crowded all her nation's solemn  
feasts  
With white-rob'd Levites and high-  
mitred Priests;  
How gorgeous all her Temple's sacred  
state!



Her streets are razed, her maidens sold  
for slaves,  
Her gates thrown down, her elders in  
their graves;  
Her feasts are holden 'mid the Gentile's  
scorn,  
By stealth her Priesthood's holy gar-  
ments worn;  
And where her Temple crown'd the  
glittering rock,  
The wandering shepherd folds his  
evening flock.

When shall the work, the work of death  
begin?  
When come th' avengers of proud Ju-  
dah's sin?—  
Aceldama! accurs'd and guilty ground,  
Gird well the city in thy dismal bound,  
Her price is paid, and she is sold like  
thou;  
Let every ancient monument and tomb  
Enlarge the border of its vaulted gloom,  
Their spacious chambers all are want-  
ed now.

But nevermore shall yon lost city  
need  
Those secret places for her future dead;  
Of all her children, when this night is  
pass'd,  
Devoted Salem's darkest, and her last,  
Of all her children none is left to her,  
Save those whose house is in the sep-  
ulchre.

Yet, guilty city, who shall mourn for  
thee?

Shall Christian voices wail thy de-  
vastation?  
Look down! look down, avengèd Cal-  
vary,

Upon thy late yet dreadful expiation.  
Oh! long foretold, though slow accom-  
plish'd fate,

"Her house is left unto her desolate;"  
Proud Caesar's ploughshare o'er her  
ruins driven,

Fulfills at length the tardy doom of  
heaven;

The wrathful vial's drops at length are  
pou'd

On the rebellious race that crucified  
their Lord!

## STREETS OF JERUSALEM—NIGHT

*Many Jews Meeting.*

FIRST JEW.

Saw ye it, father? saw ye what the  
city  
Stands gazing at? As I pass'd through  
the streets,  
There were pale women wandering up  
and down;  
And on the house-tops there were hag-  
gard faces  
Turn'd to the heavens, where'er the  
ghostly light  
Fell on them. Even the prowling  
plunderers,  
That break our houses for suspected  
food,  
Their quick and stealthful footsteps  
check, and gasp  
In wonder. They, that in deep wear-  
iness,  
Or wounded in the battle of the morn,  
Had cast themselves to slumber on the  
stones,  
Lift up their drowsy heads, and lan-  
guidly  
Do shudder at the sight.

SECOND JEW.

What sight? what say'st thou?

FIRST JEW.

The star, the star, the fiery-tresséd star,  
That all this fatal year hath hung in  
the heavens  
Above us, gleaming like a bloody sword,  
Twice hath it moved. Men cried aloud,  
"A tempest!"  
And there was blackness, as of thunder  
clouds:  
But yet that angry sign glared fiercely  
through them,  
And the third time, with slow and sol-  
emn motion,  
'Twas shaken and brandish'd.

SECOND JEW.

Timorous boy! thou speak'st  
As though these things were strange.  
Why now we sleep



With prodigies ablaze in all the heavens,  
 And the earth teeming with portentous signs,  
 As sound as when the moon and constant stars  
 Beam'd quietly upon the slumbering earth  
 Their customary fires. Dost thou remember,  
 At Pentecost, when all the land of Judah  
 Stood round the Altar, at the dead of night,  
 A Light broke out, and all the Temple shone  
 With the meteorous glory? 'twas not like  
 The light of sun or moon, but it was clear  
 And bright as either, only that it with-er'd  
 Men's faces to a hue like death.

## THIRD JEW.

'Twas strange!  
 And, if I err not, on that very day,  
 The Priest led forth the spotless sacrifice,  
 And as he led it, it fell down, and cast  
 Its young upon the sacred pavement.

## FOURTH JEW.

Brethren,  
 Have ye forgot the eve, when war broke out  
 Even in the heavens? all the wide northern sky  
 Was rocking with arm'd men and fiery chariots.  
 With an abrupt and sudden noiselessness,  
 Wildly, confusedly, they cross'd and mingled,  
 As when the Red Sea waves dash'd to and fro  
 The crazed cars of Pharaoh—

## THIRD JEW.

Who comes here  
 In his white robes so hastily?

## FIRST JEW.

'Tis the Levite,  
 The Holy Aaron.

## LEVITE.

Brethren! Oh, my Brethren!

## THE JEWS.

Speak, Rabbi, all our souls thirst for thy words.

## LEVITE.

But now within the Temple, as I minister'd,  
 There was a silence round us; the wild sounds  
 Of the o'erwearied war had fallen asleep.  
 A silence, even as though all earth were fix'd  
 Like us in adoration, when the gate,  
 The Eastern gate, with all its ponderous bars  
 And bolts of iron, started wide asunder,  
 And all the strength of man doth vainly toil  
 To close the stubborn and rebellious leaves.

## FIRST JEW.

What now?

## ANOTHER JEW.

What now! why all things sad and monstrous.  
 The Prophets stand aghast, and vainly seek,  
 Amid the thronging and tumultuous signs  
 Which crowd this wild disastrous night, the intent  
 Of the Eternal. Wonder breaks o'er wonder,  
 As the clouds roll o'er each other in the skies;  
 And Terror, wantoning with man's perplexity,  
 No sooner hath infix'd the awed attention

On some strange prodigy, than it  
straight distracts it  
To a stranger and more fearful.

THIRD JEW.

Hark! what's there?  
Fresh horror!—

(*At a distance.*)

To the sound of timbrels sweet,  
Moving slow our solemn feet,  
We have borne thee on the road,  
To the virgin's blest abode;  
With thy yellow torches gleaming,  
And thy scarlet mantle streaming,  
And the canopy above  
Swaying as we slowly move.

Thou hast left the joyous feast,  
And the mirth and wine have ceas'd;  
And now we set thee down before  
The jealously-unclosing door;  
That the favour'd youth admits  
Where the veiled virgin sits  
In the bliss of maiden fear,  
Waiting our soft tread to hear;  
And the music's brisker din,  
At the bridegroom's entering in,  
Entering in a welcome guest  
To the chamber of his rest.

SECOND JEW.

It is the bridal song of Amariah  
And fair Salone. In the house of Si-  
mon  
The rites are held; nor bears the  
Bridegroom home  
His plighted Spouse, but there doth  
deck his chamber;  
These perilous times dispensing with  
the rigor  
Of ancient usage—

VOICE WITHIN.

Woe! woe! woe!

FIRST JEW.

Alas!

The son of Hananiah! is't not he?

THIRD JEW.

Whom said'st?

SECOND JEW.

Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem,  
That thou rememberest not that fearful  
man?

FOURTH JEW.

Speak! speak! we know not all.

SECOND JEW.

Why thus it was:  
A rude and homely dresser of the vine,  
He had come up to the Feast of Tab-  
ernacles,  
When suddenly a spirit fell upon him,  
Evil or good we know not. Ever since,  
(And now seven years are past since  
it befell,  
Our city then being prosperous and at  
peace),  
He hath gone wandering through the  
darkling streets  
At midnight under the cold quiet stars;  
He hath gone wandering through the  
crowded market  
At noonday under the bright blazing  
sun,  
With that one ominous cry of "Woe,  
woe, woe!"  
Some scoff'd and mock'd him, some  
would give him food;  
He neither curs'd the one, nor thank'd  
the other.  
The Sanhedrim bade scourge him, and  
myself  
Beheld him lash'd, till the bare bones  
stood out  
Through the maim'd flesh, still, still he  
only cried,  
Woe to the City, till his patience  
wearied  
The angry persecutors. When they  
freed him,  
'Twas still the same, the incessant Woe,  
woe, woe.  
But when our siege began, awhile he  
ceased,  
As though his prophecy were fulfill'd;  
till now  
We had not heard his dire and boding  
voice.

## WITHIN.

Woe! woe! woe!

*JOSHUA, the Son of Hananiah.*

Woe! woe!

A voice from the East! a voice from the West!

From the four winds a voice against Jerusalem!

A voice against the Temple of the Lord!

A voice against the Bridegrooms and the Brides!

A voice against all people of the land! Woe! woe! woe!

## SECOND JEW.

They are the very words, the very voice Which we have heard so long. And yet, methinks,

There is a mournful triumph in the tone

Ne'er heard before. His eyes, that were of old

Fix'd on the earth, now wander all abroad,

As though the tardy consummation Afflicted him with wonder—Hark! again.

## CHORUS OF MAIDENS.

Now the jocund song is thine,  
Bride of David's kingly line!  
How thy dove-like bosom trembleth,  
And thy shrouded eye resembleth  
Violets, when the dews of eve  
A moist and tremulous glitter leave  
On the bashful seal'd lid!  
Close within the bride-veil hid,  
Motionless thou sit'st and mute;  
Save that at the soft salute  
Of each entering maiden friend  
Thou dost rise and softly bend.

Hark! a brisker, merrier glee!  
The door unfolds,—'tis he, 'tis he.  
Thus we lift our lamps to meet him,  
Thus we touch our lutes to greet him.  
Thou shalt give a fonder meeting,  
Thou shalt give a tenderer greeting.

## JOSHUA.

Woe! woe!

A voice from the East! a voice from the West!

From the four winds a voice against Jerusalem!

A voice against the Temple of the Lord!

A voice against the Bridegrooms and the Brides!

A voice against all people of the land! Woe! woe—

[*Bursts away, followed by Second Jew.*]

## FIRST JEW.

Didst speak?

## THIRD JEW.

No.

## FOURTH JEW.

Look'd he on *us* as he spake?

FIRST JEW (*to the Second returning.*)

Thou, follow'dst him! what now?

## SECOND JEW.

'Twas a True Prophet!

## THE JEWS.

Wherefore? Where went he?

## SECOND JEW.

To the outer wall;  
And there he suddenly cried out and sternly,

"A voice against the son of Hananiah!  
"Woe, woe!" and at the instant,  
whether struck

By a chance stone from the enemy's engines, down  
He sank and died!—

## THIRD JEW.

There's some one comes this way—  
Art sure he died indeed?

## LEVITE.

It is the High-Priest.  
The ephod gleams through the pale  
lowering night;  
The breastplate gems, and the pure  
mitre-gold,  
Shine lamplike, and the bells that fringe  
his robe  
Chime faintly.

## HIGH PRIEST.

Israel, hear! I do beseech you,  
Brethren, give ear!—

## SECOND JEW.

Who's he that will not hear  
The words of God's High-Priest?

## HIGH PRIEST.

It was but now  
I sate within the Temple, in the court  
That's consecrate to mine office—Your  
eyes wander—

## JEWS.

Go on!—

## HIGH PRIEST.

Why hearken, then—Upon a sudden  
The pavement seem'd to swell beneath  
my feet,  
And the Veil shiver'd, and the pillars  
rock'd.  
And there, within the very Holy of  
Holies,  
There, from behind the wingéd Cheru-  
bim,  
Where the Ark stood, noise, hurried  
and tumultuous,  
Was heard, as when a king with all his  
host  
Doth quit his palace. And anon, a voice,  
Or voices, half in grief, half anger, yet  
Nor human grief nor anger, even it  
seem'd  
As though the hoarse and rolling thun-  
der spake  
With the articulate voice of man, it  
said,  
"LET US DEPART!"

## JEWS.

Most terrible! What follow'd?  
Speak on! speak on!

## HIGH PRIEST.

I know not why, I felt  
As though an outcast from the aban-  
don'd Temple.  
And fled.

## JEWS.

Oh God! and Father of our Fathers,  
Dost thou desert us?

## CHORUS OF YOUTHS AND MAIDENS.

Under a happy planet art thou led,  
Oh, chosen Virgin! to thy bridal bed.  
So put thou off thy soft and bashful  
sadness,  
And wipe away the timid maiden  
tear,—  
Lo! redolent with the Prophet's oil of  
gladness,  
And mark'd by heaven, the Bride-  
groom Youth is here.

## FIRST JEW.

Hark—hark! an arméd tread!

## SECOND JEW.

The bold Ben Cathla!

## BEN CATHLA.

Ay, ye are met, all met, as in a mart,  
T' exchange against each other your  
dark tales  
Of this night's fearful prodigies. I  
know it,  
By the inquisitive and half-suspicious  
looks  
With which ye eye each other, ye do  
wish  
To disbelieve all ye have heard, and  
yet  
Ye dare not. If ye have seen the moon  
unsphered,  
And the stars fall; if the pale sheeted  
ghosts  
Have met you wandering, and have  
pointed at you

With ominous designation; yet I scoff  
Your poor and trivial terrors—Know  
ye Michol?

JEWS.

Michol!

BEN CATHLA.

The noble lady, she whose fathers  
Dwelt beyond Jordan—

SECOND JEW.

Yes, we know her,  
The tender and the delicate of women.  
That would not set her foot upon the  
ground  
For delicacy and very tenderness.

BEN CATHLA.

The same!—We had gone forth in  
quest of food:  
And we had enter'd many a house,  
where men

Were preying upon meagre herbs and  
skins;

And some were sating upon loathsome  
things

Unutterable, the ravening hunger.  
Some,

Whom we had plunder'd oft, laugh'd in  
their agony

To see us baffled. At her door she met  
us,

And "we have feasted together here-  
tofore,"

She said, "most welcome warriors!"  
and she led us,

And bade us sit like dear and honour'd  
guests,

While she made ready. Some among  
us wonder'd,

And some spake jeeringly, and thank'd  
the lady

That she had thus with provident care  
reserved

The choicest banquet for our scarcest  
days.

But ever as she busily minister'd,  
Quick, sudden sobs of laughter broke  
from her.

At length the vessel's covering she  
rais'd up,

And there it lay—

HIGH PRIEST.

What lay?—Thou'rt sick and pale.

BEN CATHLA.

By earth and heaven, the remnant of  
a child!

A human child!—Ay, start! so started  
we—

Whereat she shriek'd aloud, and clapp'd  
her hands,

"Oh! dainty and fastidious appetites!

"The mother feasts upon her babe, and  
strangers

"Loathe the repast"—and then—"My  
beautiful child!

"The treasure of my womb! my bos-  
om's joy!"

And then in her cool madness did she  
spurn us

Out of her doors. Oh still—oh still I  
hear her,

And I shall hear her till my day of  
death.

HIGH PRIEST.

Oh, God of Mercies! this was once thy  
city!

CHORUS.

Joy to thee, beautiful and bashful  
Bride!

Joy! for the thrills of pride and joy  
become thee;

Thy curse of barrenness is taken from  
thee.

And thou shalt see the rosy infant  
sleeping

Upon the snowy fountain of thy  
breast;

And thou shalt feel how mothers  
hearts are blest

By hours of bliss for moment's pain  
and weeping.

Joy to thee!

*The above, SIMON, JOHN.*

SIMON.

Away! what do ye in our midnight  
streets?

Go sleep! go sleep! or we shall have  
to lash you,  
When the horn summons to the morn-  
ing's war,  
From out your drowsy beds—Away! I  
say.

HIGH-PRIEST.

Simon, thou know'st not the dark signs  
abroad.

JOHN.

Ay! is't not fearful and most ominous  
That the sun shines not at deep mid-  
night. Mark me,  
Ye men with gasping lips and shiver-  
ing limbs,  
Thou mitred priest, and ye misnaméd  
warriors,  
If ye infect with your pale aguish fears  
Our valiant city, we'll nor leave you  
limbs  
To shake, nor voices to complain—T'  
your homes.

SIMON, JOHN.

JOHN.

In truth, good Simon, I am half your  
proselyte;  
Your angels, that do bear such excel-  
lent wine,  
Might shake a faith more firm than  
ours.

SIMON.

My soul is jocund. Expectation soars  
Before mine eyes, like to a new-  
fledg'd eagle,  
And stoopeth from her heavens with  
palms ne'er worn  
By brows of Israel. Glory mounts with  
her,  
Her deep seraphic trumpet swelling  
loud  
O'er Zion's gladdening towers.

JOHN.

Why, then, to sleep.  
This fight by day, and revel all the  
night,  
Needs some repose—I'll to my bed—  
Farewell!

SIMON.

Brave John, farewell! and I'll to rest,  
and dream  
Upon the coming honours of to-mor-  
row.

MIRIAM.

To-morrow! will that morrow dawn  
upon thee?  
I've warn'd them, I have lifted up my  
voice  
As loud as 'twere an angel's, and well  
nigh  
Had I betray'd my secret: they but  
scoff'd,  
And ask'd how long I had been a  
prophetess?  
But that injurious John did foully  
taunt me,  
As though I envied my lost sister's  
bridal.  
And when I clung to my dear father's  
neck,  
With the close fondness of a last em-  
brace,  
He shook me from him.

But, ah me! how strange!

This moment, and the hurrying streets  
were full  
As at a festival, now all's so silent  
That I might hear the footsteps of a  
child.  
The sound of dissolute mirth hath  
ceased, the lamps  
Are spent, the voice of music broken  
off.  
No watchman's tread comes from the  
silent wall,  
There are nor lights nor voices in the  
towers.  
The hungry have given up their idle  
search  
For food, the gazers on the heavens are  
gone,  
Even fear's at rest—all still as in a  
sepulchre!  
And thou liest sleeping, oh Jerusalem!  
A deeper slumber could not fall upon  
thee,  
If thou wert desolate of all thy chil-  
dren,  
And thy razed streets a dwelling-place  
for owls.



I do mistake! this is the Wilderness,  
The Desert, where winds pass and  
make no sound,  
And not the populous city, the be-  
sieged  
And overhung with tempest. Why, my  
voice,  
My motion, breaks upon the oppressive  
stillness

Like a forbidden and disturbing sound.  
The very air's asleep, my feeblest  
breathing

Is audible—I'll think my prayers—and  
then—

—Ha! 'tis the thunder of the Living  
God!

It peals! it crashes! it comes down in  
fire!

Again it is the engine of the foe,  
Our walls are dust before it—Wake—  
oh wake—

Oh Israel!—Oh Jerusalem, awake!  
Why shouldst thou wake? thy foe is in  
the heavens.

Yea, thy judicial slumber weighs thee  
down,

And gives thee, oh! lost city, to the  
Gentile

Defenceless, unresisting.

It rolls down,  
As though the Everlasting raged not  
now

Against our guilty Zion, but did mingle  
The universal world in our destruction;  
And all mankind were destined for a  
sacrifice

On Israel's funeral pile. Oh Crucified!  
Here, here, where thou didst suffer, I  
beseech thee

Even by thy Cross!

Hark! now in impious rivalry  
Man thunders. In the center of our  
streets

The Gentile trumpet, the triumphant  
shouts

Of onset; and I—I, a trembling girl,  
Alone, awake, abroad.

Oh, now ye wake,  
Now ye pour forth, and hideous Mas-  
sacre,  
Loathing his bloodless conquest, joys to  
see you

Thus naked and unarm'd—But where's  
my father?

Upon his couch in dreams of future  
glory.

Oh! where's my sister? in her bridal  
bed.

MANY JEWS.

FIRST JEW.

To the Temple! To the Temple! Israel!  
Israel!

Your walls are on the earth, your  
houses burn

Like fires amid the autumnal olive  
grounds.

The Gentile's in the courts of the Lord's  
house.

To the Temple! save or perish with  
the Temple!

SECOND JEW.

To the Temple! haste, oh all ye cir-  
cumcised!

Stay not for wife, or child, for gold or  
treasure!

Pause not for light! the heavens are  
all on fire,

The Universal City burns!

THIRD JEW.

Arms! Arms!

Our women fall like doves into the  
nets

Of the fowler, and they dash upon the  
stones

Our innocent babes. Arms! Arms! be-  
fore we die

Let's reap a bloody harvest of revenge.  
To the Temple!

FOURTH JEW.

Simon! lo, the valiant Simon.

*The above, SIMON.*

SIMON.

He comes! he comes! the black night  
blackens with him,

And the winds groan beneath his char-  
iot wheels—

He comes from heaven, the Avenger of  
Jerusalem!

Ay, strike, proud Roman! fall, thou  
useless wall!

And vail your heads, ye towers, that  
have discharg'd

Your brief, your fruitless duty of re-  
sistance.

I've heard thee long, fierce Gentile! th'  
earthquake shocks

Of thy huge engines smote upon my  
soul,

And my soul scorn'd them. Oh! and  
hear'st not thou

One mightier than thyself, that shakes  
the heavens?

Oh pardon, that I thought that He,  
whose coming

Is promised and reveal'd, would calmly  
wait

The tardy throes of human birth. Mes-  
siah,

I know thee now, I know yon lightning  
fire

Thy robe of glory, and thy steps in  
heaven

Incessant thundering.

I had brought mine arms,  
Mine earthly arms, my breastplate and  
my sword,

To cover and defend me—Oh! but thou  
Art jealous, nor endur'st that human  
arm

Intrude on thy deliverance. I forswear  
them,

I cast them from me. Helmless, with  
nor shield

Nor sword, I stand, and in my naked-  
ness

Wait thee, victorious Roman—

JEWS.

To the Temple!

SIMON.

Ay, well thou say'st, "to the Temple"—  
there 'twill be

Most visible. In his own house the  
Lord

Will shine most glorious. Shall we  
not behold

The Fathers bursting from their yield-  
ing graves,

Patriarchs and Priests, and Kings and  
Prophets, met

A host of spectral watchmen, on the  
towers

Of Zion to behold the full accomplish-  
ing

Of every Type and deep Prophetic  
word?

Ay, to the Temple! thither will I  
too,

There bask in all the fulness of the  
day

That breaks at length o'er the long  
night of Judah.

*Chorus of Jews flying towards the  
Temple.*

Fly! fly! fly!

Clouds, not of incense, from the Tem-  
ple rise,

And there are altar-fires, but not of  
sacrifice.

And there are victims, yet nor bulls  
nor goats;

And Priests are there, but not of  
Aaron's kin;

And he that doth the murtherous rite  
begin,

To stranger Gods his hecatomb de-  
votes;

His hecatomb of Israel's chosen race  
All foully slaughter'd in their Holy  
Place.

Break into joy, ye barren, that ne'er  
bore!

Rejoice, ye breasts, where ne'er sweet  
infant hung!

From you, from you no smiling babes  
are wrung,

Ye die, but not amid your children's  
gore.

But howl and weep, oh ye that are with  
child,

Ye on whose bosoms unwean'd babes  
are laid;

The sword that's with the mother's  
blood defiled

Still with the infant gluts the in-  
satiated blade.

Fly! fly! fly!

Fly not, I say, for Death is every  
where,

To keen-eyed Lust all places are the same:  
 There's not a secret chamber in whose lair  
 Our wives can shroud them from th' abhorred shame.  
 Where the sword fails, the fire will find us there,  
 All, all is death—the Gentile or the flame.  
 On to the Temple! Brethren, Israel on!  
 Though every slippery street with carnage swims,  
 Ho! spite of famish'd hearts and wounded limbs,  
 Still, still, while yet there stands one holy stone,  
 Fight for your God, his sacred house to save,  
 Or have its blazing ruins for your grave!

#### THE FRONT OF THE TEMPLE.

SIMON.

They fight around the altar, and the dead  
 Heap the chok'd pavement. Israel tramples Israel,  
 And Gentile Gentile, rushing where the Temple,  
 Like to a pit of frantic gladiators,  
 Is howling with the strife of men, that fight not  
 For conquest, but the desperate joy of slaying.  
 Priests, Levites, women, pass and hurry on,  
 At least to die within the sanctuary.  
 I only wait without—I take my stand  
 Here in the vestibule—and though the thunders  
 High and aloof o'er the wide arch of heaven  
 Hold their calm march, nor deviate to their vengeance  
 On earth, in holy patience, Lord, I wait.  
 Defying thy long lingering to subdue  
 The faith of Simon.

'Twas but now I pass'd  
 The corpse of Amariah, that display'd

In the wild firelight all its wounds, and lay  
 Embalm'd in honour. John of Galilee  
 Is prisoner; I beheld him fiercely gnashing  
 His ponderous chains. Of me they take no heed,  
 For I disdain to tempt them to my death,  
 And am not arm'd to slay.  
 The light within  
 Grows redder, broader. 'Tis a fire that burns  
 To save or to destroy. On Sinai's top,  
 Oh Lord! thou didst appear in flames, the mountain  
 Burnt round about thee. Art thou here at length,  
 And must I close mine eyes, lest they be blinded  
 By the full conflagration of thy presence?

TITUS, PLACIDUS, TERENTIUS, SOLDIERS,  
 SIMON.

TITUS.

Save, save the Temple! Placidus, Terentius,  
 Haste, bid the legions cease to slay; and quench  
 Yon ruining fire.  
 Who's this, that stands unmoved  
 Mid slaughter, flame, and wreck, nor deigns to bow  
 Before the Conqueror of Jerusalem?  
 What art thou?

SIMON.

Titus, dost thou think that Rome  
 Shall quench the fire that burns within yon Temple?  
 Ay, when your countless and victorious cohorts,  
 Ay, when your Caesar's throne, your Capitol  
 Have fallen before it.

TITUS.

Madman, speak! what art thou?

SIMON.

The uncircumcised have known me  
heretofore,  
And thou mayst know hereafter.

PLACIDUS.

It is he—  
The bloody Captain of the Rebels,  
Simon,  
The Chief Assassin. Seize him, round  
his limbs  
Bind straight your heaviest chains. An  
unhop'd pageant  
For Caesar's high ovation. We'll not  
slay him  
Till we have made a show to the wives  
of Rome  
Of the great Hebrew Chieftain.

SIMON.

Knit them close,  
See that ye rivet well their galling links.

*(Holding up the chains.)*

And ye've no finer flax to gyve me with?

TERENTIUS.

Burst these, and we will forge thee  
stronger then.

SIMON.

Fool, 'tis not yet the hour.

TITUS.

Hark! hark! the shrieks  
Of those that perish in the flames. Too  
late  
I came to spare, it wraps the fabric  
round.  
Fate, Fate, I feel thou'rt mightier than  
Caesar,  
He cannot save what thou hast  
doom'd! Back, Romans,  
Withdraw your angry cohorts, and give  
place  
To the inevitable ruin. Destiny,  
It is thine own, and Caesar yields it  
to thee.  
Lead off the prisoner.

SIMON.

Can it be? the fire  
Destroys, the thunders cease. I'll not  
believe,  
And yet how dare I doubt?  
A moment, Romans.  
Is't then thy will, Almighty Lord of  
Israel,  
That this thy Temple be a heap of  
ashes?  
Is't then thy will, that I, thy chosen  
Captain,  
Put on the raiment of captivity?  
By Abraham, our father! by the  
Twelve,  
The Patriarch Sons of Jacob! by the  
Law,  
In thunder spoken! by the untouch'd  
Ark!  
By David, and the Anointed Race of  
Kings!  
By great Elias, and the gifted Prophets!  
I here demand a sign!

'Tis there—I see it.  
The fire that rends the Veil!

We are then of thee  
Abandon'd—not abandon'd of our-  
selves.

Heap woes upon us, scatter us abroad,  
Earth's scorn and hissing; to the race  
of men

A loathsome proverb; spurn'd by every  
foot,

And curs'd by every tongue; our heri-  
tage

And birthright bondage; and our very  
brows

Bearing, like Cain's, the outcast mark  
of hate:

Israel will still be Israel, still will boast  
Her fallen Temple, her departed glory;  
And, wrapt in conscious righteousness,  
defy

Earth's utmost hate, and answer scorn  
with scorn.

## THE FOUNTAIN OF SILOE.

MIRIAM, THE SOLDIER.

MIRIAM.

Here, here—not here—oh! anywhere  
but here—

Not toward the fountain, not by this  
 lone path.  
 If thou wilt bear me hence, I'll kiss thy  
 feet,  
 I'll call down blessings, a lost virgin's  
 blessings  
 Upon thy head. Thou hast hurried  
 me along,  
 Through darkling street, and over  
 smoking ruin,  
 And yet there seem'd a soft solicitude,  
 And an officious kindness in thy vio-  
 lence—  
 But I've not heard thy voice.

Oh, strangely cruel!

And wilt thou make me sit even on this  
 stone,  
 Where I have sate so oft, when the  
 calm moonlight  
 Lay in its slumber on the slumbering  
 fountain?  
 Ah! where art thou, thou that wert  
 ever with me,  
 Oh Javan! Javan!

THE SOLDIER.

When was Javan call'd  
 By Miriam, that Javan answer'd not?  
 Forgive me all thy tears, thy agonies.  
 I dar'd not speak to thee, lest the  
 strong joy  
 Should overpower thee, and thy feeble  
 limbs  
 Refuse to bear thee in thy flight.

MIRIAM.

What's here?

Am I in heaven, and thou forehasted  
 thither  
 To welcome me? Ah, no! thy war-  
 like garb,  
 And the wild light, that reddens all the  
 air,  
 Those shrieks—and yet this could not  
 be on earth,  
 The sad, the desolate, the sinful earth.  
 And thou couldst venture amid fire and  
 death,  
 Amid thy country's ruins to protect me,  
 Dear Javan?

JAVAN.

'Tis not now the first time, Miriam,

That I have held my life a worthless  
 sacrifice  
 For thine. Oh! all these later days of  
 siege  
 I've slept in peril, and I've woken in  
 peril.  
 For every meeting I've defied the cross,  
 On which the Roman, in his merciless  
 scorn,  
 Bound all the sons of Salem. Sweet,  
 I boast not;  
 But to thank rightly our Deliverer,  
 We must know all the extent of his  
 deliverance.

MIRIAM.

And I can only weep!

JAVAN.

Ay, thou shouldst weep,  
 Lost Zion's daughter.

MIRIAM.

Ah! I thought not then  
 Of my dead sister and my captive  
 father—  
 Said they not "captive" as we pass'd?—  
 I thought not  
 Of Zion's ruin and the Temple's waste.  
 Javan, I fear that mine are tears of  
 joy;  
 'Tis sinful at such times—but thou art  
 here,  
 And I am on thy bosom, and I cannot  
 Be, as I ought, entirely miserable.

JAVAN.

My own beloved! I dare call thee mine,  
 For Heaven hath given thee to me—  
 chosen out,  
 As we two are, for solitary blessing,  
 While the universal curse is pour'd  
 around us  
 On every head, 'twere cold and barren  
 gratitude  
 To stifle in our hearts the holy glad-  
 ness.  
 But, oh Jerusalem! thy rescued chil-  
 dren  
 May not, retir'd within their secret joy,  
 Shut out the mournful sight of thy  
 calamities.



Oh, beauty of earth's cities! thronèd  
queen

Of thy milk-flowing valleys! crown'd  
with glory!

The envy of the nations! now no more

A city—One by one thy palaces

Sink into ashes, and the uniform smoke

O'er half thy circuit hath brought back  
the night

Which the insulting flames had made  
give place

To their untimely terrible day. The  
flames

That in the Temple, their last proudest  
conquest,

Now gather all their might, and furi-  
ously,

Like revellers, hold there exulting tri-  
umph.

Round every pillar, over all the roof,  
On the wide gorgeous front, the holy  
depth

Of the far sanctuary, every portico,

And every court, at once, concentrated,

As though to glorify and not destroy,  
They burn, they blaze—

Look, Miriam, how it stands!

Look!

MIRIAM.

There are men around us!

JAVAN.

They are friends,

Bound here to meet me, and behold the  
last

Of our devoted city. Look, oh Chris-  
tians!

Still the Lord's house survives man's  
fallen dwellings,

And wears its ruin with a majesty  
Peculiar and divine. Still, still it  
stands,

All one wide fire, and yet no stone hath  
fallen.

Hark—hark!

The feeble cry of an expiring nation.

Hark—hark!

The awe-struck shout of the unboasting  
conqueror.

Hark—hark!

It breaks—it severs—it is on the earth.

The smother'd fires are quench'd in  
their own ruins:

Like a huge dome, the vast and cloudy  
smoke

Hath cover'd all.

And it is now no more,

Nor ever shall be to the end of time,

The Temple of Jerusalem!—Fall down,

My brethren, on the dust, and worship  
here

The mysteries of God's wrath.

Even so shall perish,

In its own ashes, a more glorious Tem-  
ple,

Yea, God's own architecture, this vast  
world,

This fated universe—the same de-  
stroyer,

The same destruction—Earth, Earth,  
Earth, behold!

And in that judgment look upon thine  
own!

HYMN.

Even thus amid thy pride and luxury,  
Oh Earth! shall that last coming burst  
on thee,

That secret coming of the Son of  
Man.

When all the cherub-throning clouds  
shall shine,

Irradiate with his bright advancing  
sign:

When that Great Husbandman shall  
wave his fan,

Sweeping, like chaff, thy wealth and  
pomp away:

Still to the noontide of that nightless  
day,

Shalt thou thy wonted dissolute  
course maintain.

Along the busy mart and crowded  
street,

The buyer and the seller still shall meet,  
And marriage feasts begin their

jocund strain:

Still to the pouring out the Cup of  
Woe;

Till Earth, a drunkard, reeling to and  
fro,

And mountains molten by his burning  
feet,

And Heaven his presence own, all red  
with furnace heat.

The hundred-gated Cities then,

The Towers and Temples, nam'd  
of men



Eternal, and the Thrones of Kings;  
 The gilded summer Palaces,  
 The courtly bowers of love and  
 ease.  
 Where still the Bird of pleasure  
 sings;  
 Ask ye the destiny of them?  
 Go gaze on fallen Jerusalem!  
 Yea, mightier names are in the fatal  
 roll,  
 'Gainst earth and heaven God's stand-  
 ard is unfurl'd,  
 The skies are shrivell'd like a burning  
 scroll,  
 And the vast common doom ensep-  
 ulchres the world.  
 Oh! who shall then survive?  
 Oh! who shall stand and live?  
 When all that hath been, is no more:  
 When for the round earth hung in  
 air,  
 With all its constellations fair  
 In the sky's azure canopy;  
 When for the breathing Earth, and  
 Sparkling Sea,  
 Is but a fiery deluge without shore,  
 Heaving along the abyss profound and  
 dark,  
 A fiery deluge, and without an Ark.

Lord of all power, when thou art  
 there alone  
 On thy eternal fiery-wheelèd  
 throne,  
 That in its high meridian noon

Needs not the perish'd sun nor moon:  
 When thou art there in thy presiding  
 state,  
 Wide-scepter'd Monarch o'er the  
 realm of doom:  
 When from the sea depths, from  
 earth's darkest womb,  
 The dead of all the ages round thee  
 wait:  
 And when the tribes of wickedness are  
 strewn  
 Like forest leaves in the autumn of  
 thine ire:  
 Faithful and True! thou still wilt save  
 thine own!  
 The Saints shall dwell within th'  
 unpharming fire,  
 Each white robe spotless, blooming  
 every palm.  
 Even safe as we, by this still foun-  
 tain's side,  
 So shall the Church, thy bright and  
 mystic, Bride,  
 Sit on the stormy gulf a halcyon bird  
 of calm.  
 Yes, 'mid yon angry and destroying  
 signs,  
 O'er us the rainbow of thy mercy  
 shines,  
 We hail, we bless the covenant of its  
 beam,  
 Almighty to avenge, Almightyest to re-  
 deem!

HENRY HART MILMAN (1791-1868).

# HEROD AND MARIAMNE

A TRAGEDY



# HEROD AND MARIAMNE

## A TRAGEDY.

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I.

*A hall in HEROD's palace.*

*Enter JOSEPH and SOHEMUS.*

JOSEPH.

It hath come, good Sohemus. 'T hath come.

SOHEMUS.

What, brother?

JOSEPH.

The king is summoned by Antonius  
Unto Laodicea concerning—

SOHEMUS.

Well?

JOSEPH.

Lower, I pray you—why, concerning,  
sir,  
The death of Aristobulus.

SOHEMUS.

Heaven save us!

What saith the queen?

JOSEPH.

Which queen, my Sohemus?  
There are so many queens in Herod's  
palace,  
We needs must name them when we  
speak of them.  
By Moses' beard! the wild bees have  
more wisdom:  
They have one queen, where Herod  
houses four.

There is his mother Cypros, and his  
sister

My wife Salome: they do hate most  
violently

His consort Mariamne, and her mother,  
The old king's daughter, Alexandra.

SOHEMUS.

Nay,

All this I know by demonstration, sir.  
The information that I crave concerns  
Queen Mariamne. Doth she think her  
brother

To have been murdered?

JOSEPH.

There, sir, lies the matter.

She doth not think so, while her mother  
doth.

They have been wrangling o'er it all the  
morning,

And wrangle yet. My wife and Cypros  
sulk

Within their own apartments; and the  
king

Is closeted with Antony's messenger.

SOHEMUS.

Where is Hyrcanus?

JOSEPH.

Sleeping, sir, I think

The kind old king hath but that refuge  
now

When the queens quarrel.

SOHEMUS.

A most fitting refuge!

For when queens quarrel kings are kings  
in vain.

Soft, friend! is that not Mariamne's  
voice?

JOSEPH.

It is,—and Alexandra's. Let us go,  
Ere we be dragged into their mad dispute.  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter MARIAMNE and ALEXANDRA.*

ALEXANDRA.

Art thou my daughter?

MARIAMNE.

If thou dost tell truth.

ALEXANDRA.

Insolence! Wilt thou mock me? God  
of Moses!  
Almost I think that I unknowing lie  
And that thou art a changeling! Sure  
no blood  
Of mine makes blue those traitorous  
veins o' thine!  
To call him brother, and yet love the  
king  
Who murdered him!

MARIAMNE.

Madam, I will not think it.

ALEXANDRA.

Not think it? Will not think it!

MARIAMNE.

No, madam.  
Nor hear it said. Therefore be silent.

ALEXANDRA.

Silent!

This unto me, thy mother? Silent?  
Oh,

Would I were tongued like nature!  
thou shouldst hear  
A hundred thousand voices utter,  
"Murder!"

Why, I do tell thee I have knowledge  
of it

From ten reliable sources. It was  
planned—

Ay, planned from first to last. And he,  
thy brother,

So young, so fair, that even thou didst  
show  
Old and uncomely by his side!

MARIAMNE.

Good mother,  
None loved my brother more than I  
did love,  
And love him; therefore go I quietly,  
Thinking how did he live he would pre-  
fer  
That we should mourn him, not with  
cries and curses,  
But in the stillness of our hearts with  
prayer.

ALEXANDRA.

Prayers for his murderer? Oh, 'tis  
well! 'tis well!  
Thou art so eaten with unnatural love  
For this thy kingly sinner, that thy  
heart  
Hath no unoccupied cranny where might  
lodge  
Love natural for him whom he hath  
murdered.

MARIAMNE.

I will not hear that word again.

ALEXANDRA.

Not hear it?  
Canst command deafness, that thou wilt  
not hear it?  
I say that Herod hath thy brother  
murdered,—  
Murdered! Ay, murdered! murdered!  
Dost thou hear?  
Or, being queen, canst thou command  
thy ears  
That they drink not unwelcome sounds?

MARIAMNE.

No, madam;  
But I can twenty hands command to  
take thee  
Where thy voice cannot reach my ears.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, do it!  
Do it, I say! 'Twere well that Herod's  
wife

Took Herod's way; 'twere well Hyrcanus' daughter  
Should be o'er-daughtered in Hyrcanus' palace;  
'Twere well the blood of Aristobulus  
Should not cry out, lest Herod seeking sleep  
Should be disturbed. O God of Israel,  
God of the widowed and the childless,  
hear!  
To Thee I turn, to Thee shall mount  
my grief;  
Thine ears shall drink this murder, and  
Thine arm  
Destroy the murderer.

MARIAMNE.

Madam, have done.

ALEXANDRA.

Have done! Have done, didst say?  
When hell is finished,  
Packed full, and the gates locked against  
new-comers,  
I will have done.—O Aristobulus,  
This was thy sister, and is wife to him  
Who had thee murdered.

MARIAMNE.

Mother, be advised.  
My duty as thy daughter hath a limit.

ALEXANDRA.

Thy duty unto Herod hath no limit.  
What! wilt thou take his hand, lie by  
his side,  
Be mother of his children, and the blood  
Of the high-priest thy brother red be-  
tween ye?  
I tell thee, woman, thou wilt know my  
pangs  
When thou hast brought forth sons for  
him to slay!

MARIAMNE.

Mother, here comes the king! 'Twere  
best indeed  
He did not hear thee.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, now it were best;  
But there will come a time, I tell you,  
girl,

He'll curse the day that he was born  
with ears!

MARIAMNE.

In truth, you'd best be silent.

ALEXANDRA.

I will go;  
Fear not but that I'll go. God blast these  
eyes  
If ever they are willing witnesses  
Unto thy dalliance with Herod!

[Exit.]

MARIAMNE.

Nay,  
God knows I loved my brother, and do  
mourn him  
With a sore heart; but when my mother  
thus  
Doth lay his death upon the king my  
husband,  
She doth divide my pity with her hate,  
And makes my grief half Herod's. Ay,  
by heaven!  
Though he be rash, hot-natured, mad  
in wrath,  
And prone to take occasion by the  
throat,  
He is as little capable of murder  
As this my heart of killing the great  
love  
That I do bear him Ah, he comes, and  
anger  
Hot at his heels!

Enter HEROD.

HEROD.

[Not seeing MARIAMNE.]

Herod com-  
manded by a Roman turn-coat!  
Antony summon Herod! Antony,—  
The by-word of all nations, the last  
toy  
Of an Egyptian wanton! Who that  
reads  
In future ages will believe it? Oh  
That Antony had summoned me in per-  
son!  
The Egyptian harlot had been loverless  
In less time than she takes to make a  
kiss.—  
Ah, Mariamne!



MARIAMNE.

Shall I stay, my lord?

HEROD.

Hath Herod ever bid thee from him?

MARIAMNE.

No.

But I can well imagine that this sum-  
mons

Hath left thee with a love of loneliness.

HEROD.

Come close. Give me thine eyes. Dost  
think with Antony  
Concerning this affair?

MARIAMNE.

With Antony?

HEROD.

Ay,—that thy brother's blood is on my  
hands.

Thou dost not think it?

MARIAMNE.

As I live, my lord,  
If I do think it, let me live no longer.

HEROD.

Then I care not who thinks it. Mari-  
amne,

I am not Herod when I am with thee.

MARIAMNE.

What then, my lord?

HEROD.

Why, Mariamne's lover.

I am no longer king, no longer soldier,  
No longer conqueror, unless in truth  
I rule thy heart.

MARIAMNE.

Thou knowest that my heart  
Is but thy throne.

HEROD.

Let me be king of thee,  
And God is welcome to the sway of  
heaven.

MARIAMNE.

Do not blaspheme.

HEROD.

Away! thy veins run milk  
And make thy heart a baby. Not blas-  
pheme!

Love cannot utter blasphemy, for Love  
Is his own god and king of his own  
heaven.

Well, dost thou love me?

MARIAMNE.

Thou dost know I do.

HEROD.

Thou dost not! Thou dost make a pet  
of Duty,

And fatten him on what should be my  
food.

Love me? Not thou! Thou lovest the  
cold peace

That's child of frozen virtue. I have  
fire

To melt the Sphinx, but not to warm  
the blood

Of one chaste woman.

MARIAMNE.

Chaste I am, my lord,  
Yet for that chasteness do but better  
love thee.

HEROD.

I tell thee no! Thou dost but use the  
word

To play with, as a child its father's  
sword.

Thou hast ne'er seen it scarlet with joy's  
death,

Or smoking with the heart's blood of a  
thought.

What! thou lie 'wake o' nights? Thou  
scorch thy brain

With bootless wishing? Thou eat  
pictured lips?

Thou feed regret with memory, and  
then rage

Because he is not satisfied? Thou love?  
Nay, girl, the sun will set the sea afire  
Ere thy cool heart be set aflame with  
love.

Moreover, look you, sooner shall the  
waves

Of that same ocean cool the thirsty sun  
Than thy pale humour make me moderate.

MARIAMNE.

I would not have thee love me less.

HEROD.

Thou wouldst not?

Why dost thou shrink, then? Look how  
thou dost pale

And redden when I touch thee. Come,  
thine eyes,

Thine arms, thy lips,—still shrinking?  
Israel's God!

Shall Herod coax his lawful wife for  
favours?

I say thou dost not love me, yea, more-  
over,

That thou dost lie when thou wouldst  
have me think

Thou dost not blame me for thy brother's  
death.

I know thou thinkest that I had him  
slain.

MARIAMNE.

I do not think it, Herod. Dost thou  
think

I would be here if I believed it?

HEROD.

Where,

Where wouldst thou be, then? Not  
here, say'st thou?

Where then? Speak, woman! where?

MARIAMNE.

Why, dead, maybe;

But not with thee.

HEROD.

Thou liest! Didst thou die,  
I'd have thy body brought into my  
chamber

And make my bed thy sepulchre.

MARIAMNE.

Ay, Herod,

My body, but not me. Nay, my dear  
lord,

Why waste such moments as are left in  
strife

And harsh dissension? Soon thou wilt  
be gone,

And Mariamne but a recollection.

Why dost thou doubt me? Why should  
I not love thee,

Who art the chief of men and lovers?  
Nay,

If, as thou sayest, I shrink, it is be-  
cause

My love doth fear the violence of thy  
love,

Not I thyself,—not Mariamne, Herod.

HEROD.

Love is not blind, as the Greeks fable it,  
For he doth look from these fair eyes  
o' thine,

Else am I Pleasure's bondman.

MARIAMNE.

Nay, not so.

Thou'rt husband to the truest wife in  
Jewry.

HEROD.

And the least loving.

MARIAMNE.

Wilt thou wrong me still?

I know not how to dress out love in  
words.

I can but tell thee o'er and o'er again  
The naked fact, I love thee.

HEROD.

Would to heaven

I knew what loving means to thee!

MARIAMNE.

I'll tell thee:

It means to put myself beyond myself,  
To think of him I love in that self's  
stead,

To be sleep's enemy because of him,

Because of him to be the friend of pain,  
 To have no thought, no wish, no dream,  
     no memory,  
 That is not servant to him; to forget  
 All earlier loves in his,—all hates, all  
     wrongs;  
 Being meek to him, though proud unto  
     all others;  
 Gentle to him, though to all others  
     harsh;  
 To him submissive, though unto high  
     heaven  
 Something rebellious. Last, to keep my  
     patience  
 And bear his doubts, who have his  
     children borne.

HEROD.

Enough, enough. Thou most magnif-  
     icent  
 Of queens and women, I will never  
 doubt thee  
 After to-day.

MARIAMNE.

Alas, my lord, to-morrow—  
 To-morrow'll be to-day.

HEROD.

I will not doubt thee  
 So long as I do live.

MARIAMNE.

Oh that thou wouldst not!  
 Doubt is the shaft wherewith Love  
     wounds himself:  
 Doubt me no more, and be no more un-  
     happy.

HEROD.

Alas! unhappiness doth wait below  
 To ride with me, seeing I must leave  
     thee, love,  
 And that for such a summons! Jewry's  
     throne!  
 Antony summon me? It is as though  
 The dog did whistle for his master.

MARIAMNE.

Ay,  
 It is most insolent. But need'st thou  
     go?  
 Is it imperative?

HEROD.

More than thou knowest.  
 Let us not talk of it. Tell me thou'lt  
     miss me.  
 How wilt thou spend the hours when I  
     am gone?

MARIAMNE.

In wishing for the hour when thou'lt  
     return.

HEROD.

God's heart! how I do love thee!—Ha!  
     a step!  
 Curséd be any that doth interrupt us,  
 Though it be mine own mother!

MARIAMNE.

[*Starting away from him.*] 'Tis thy  
     mother.  
 Love me not in her presence, lest she  
     hate me  
 The more for thy much loving.

*Enter* CYPROS.

CYPROS.

Good my son,  
 Thy horses wait for thee.

HEROD.

Do thou likewise.  
 Seest thou not that I am occupied?

CYPROS.

A wife should urge her husband to his  
     duty,—  
 Not keep him from it.

HEROD.

Out! Such musty maxims  
 Affront the air. Leave me. I'll send  
     for thee  
 When I desire thee.

CYPROS.

Madam, wilt thou hear this  
 And say no word?

HEROD.

Think'st thou that I'll hear that  
And say no word? Depart o' the  
instant!

MARIAMNE.

Nay,  
I'll wait below. Thy mother hath some  
message,—  
Some special word for thee. I will be  
there,  
Fear not, to give thee my last love and  
blessing.  
Now let me leave thee, as I love thee.

HEROD.

Go, then.

MARIAMNE.

Why dost thou say't so harshly?

HEROD.

If thou lovedst me  
Thou wouldst not be so ready to be  
gone.

MARIAMNE.

Doubt'st me again? Remember what  
thou said'st  
A moment past, and to thy word be  
true.

HEROD.

Well, go, I will believe thee.

[Exit MARIAMNE.]

How now, mother?  
What reason shall make good of this  
offence  
To plead thy pardon?

CYPROS.

Love, my son.

HEROD.

What love  
Can pardon plead for interrupting  
mine?

Thy love, sayest thou? The love of all  
the mothers

Back counted unto Eve, and smelted  
down  
In one huge mass, would not so much  
as make  
My love a weapon.

CYPROS.

Then I'll say my pride,  
Which guards thy dignity as 'twere  
mine own.

HEROD.

My dignity?

CYPROS.

Thy honour and thy dignity.

HEROD.

My dignity? My honour? Quick, give  
word!  
What wouldst thou touch?

CYPROS.

But that which touches thee.

HEROD.

My honour! By the throne of God, thy  
honour  
Shall not survive this moment of thy  
speaking,  
If thou hast played with me.

CYPROS.

Nay, good my son,  
Think you a woman so infirm as I  
Would take a lion-whelp for plaything?  
Nay,  
Did I upon my knees approach the  
throne  
Of great Jehovah, I were not more  
serious.

HEROD.

What then? Give word. Who is it?  
Hath some one  
Proved treacherous in the household?

CYPROS.

Ay,—the one  
Who should above all else be faithful.

HEROD.

Joseph —my treasurer?—thy son-in-law?  
 What hath he done? Speak, madam:  
 I've no time  
 To tarry information.

CYPROS.

Nay, not Joseph.

HEROD.

Not Joseph? Then 'tis Sohemus. By  
 heaven!  
 Trust hath denied herself if he be false!

CYPROS.

Neither is Sohemus the guilty one.

HEROD.

Who is it, then? Delay no longer,  
 woman.  
 I'll have it, though it blast me! Who  
 is it?

CYPROS.

Mayhap I had best tell thee the offence  
 Ere naming the offender?

HEROD.

No, I say,  
 I'll hear the name. Who is it?

CYPROS.

Mariamne.

HEROD.

Thou liest! Dost thou hear? Thou  
 liest! Stop!  
 Keep from me. Come not near me.  
 Thou'rt my mother,  
 But tempt me not with nearness,—  
 tempt me not.  
 Dost know what 'tis to anger Herod?  
 Answer!  
 What! Mariamne? Mariamne false?  
 How false? False to my bed? Were  
 this proved false,  
 I'd have thee burned to warm her bed-  
 chamber!

False? Mariamne? How? With whom?  
 How false?  
 Down on thy knees and swear it!

CYPROS.

I do swear it.  
 But she is false only in thought, not  
 deed.

HEROD.

In thought? In thought? How canst  
 thou know her thought?  
 This is a lie, and thou shalt die for it.  
 —Without, there!

CYPROS.

Herod, hear me. Call no witness  
 Unto thy shame.

HEROD.

My shame? Away! Away!

CYPROS.

Salome'll prove it.

HEROD.

Though great God Himself  
 Came down as witness, I would not be-  
 lieve it!

CYPROS.

My son, if thou wouldst only let me  
 speak—

HEROD.

Speak, then. But I do warn thee that  
 thy life  
 Hangs in the balance. One thin thread  
 of gold  
 From Mariamne's temple would out-  
 weigh it.

CYPROS.

I have had certain knowledge that thy  
 wife  
 Hath sent her picture—

HEROD.

Ah?

CYPROS.

To Antony.

HEROD.

Woman, dost thou crave death, that thus  
thou tempt'st it?

To Antony? To Antony? Her picture?  
Hath sent her picture to Mark Antony,  
The Egyptian harlot's lover? She, my  
wife,

The queen of Jewry? Mariamne? She,  
The wife of Herod? Oh, if thou hast  
lied,

I'll have thy heart cut out and thrown  
straightway

Beneath the feet of Mariamne!

CYPROS.

Nay,

Thou sham'st thyself, my son, more than  
thou dost thy mother,

To give thy wrath the rein. I have had  
word.

I know the thing I speak. Salome, too,  
Doth know it.

HEROD.

That she hath her picture sent  
Unto Mark Antony?

CYPROS.

Ev'n so.

HEROD.

That she—

God! she shall come herself and answer  
this.

CYPROS.

Not so; but wait until thou art arrived  
In Laodicea, and then, in off-hand man-  
ner,

Bring up the subject to Mark Antony,  
Or Gallius, or some one of his picked  
friends,

But carelessly, as though thou found'st  
it matter

For mirth.

HEROD.

Ha, now I see why Antony  
Hath summoned me.

CYPROS.

For what, my son?

HEROD.

For what?

To take my life, that he may take my  
wife,

I see it all. It is a plot between them.  
I see it! Ha! ha! ha!

CYPROS.

Is this a time for laughter, Herod?  
Beseech you, quietly. At what dost  
laugh?

HEROD.

I laugh to think how I will foil them,  
madam!

Where's Joseph? Where is Sohemus?

CYPROS.

Sure thou wilt not word this to  
Sohemus,—  
To Joseph?

HEROD.

I will word it to Beelzebub  
If it doth pleasure me! Out of my way!  
Oh, I will play into their hands! I'll  
aid them!

I'll make them merry! Ha! ha! ha!  
Oh, I'll make them merry!

[Exit, laughing.]

Enter SALOME.

SALOME.

Why laughed my brother?

CYPROS.

At what should he laugh?  
A Herod laughs where a mere man  
would weep.

SALOME.

Hast told him of the picture?

CYPROS.

Ay.



SALOME.

What said he?

CYPROS.

He laughed, and asked me where thy  
husband was.

SALOME.

Asked thee where Joseph was?

CYPROS.

Ay.

SALOME.

God above!  
This will ruin all. Joseph would take  
her part  
Against great heaven.

CYPROS.

But he cannot deny't.

SALOME.

He'll find some means to soothe him.

CYPROS.

Well, so be it.  
I've done all in my power to ruin her.

SALOME.

Insolent vixen! I would give one-half  
Of my young life, could I but spend the  
other

In watching her abasement.

CYPROS.

Soft! Come on.

Herod returns this way. [Exeunt.]

*Enter HEROD and JOSEPH.*

JOSEPH.

What! Sent her picture to Mark  
Antony

Thy mother told thee this? Wilt thou  
believe it?

HEROD.

Whether or not I do believe it, uncle,  
I've a command for thee.

JOSEPH.

In all, my liege,  
I'll prove obedient.

HEROD.

Thou knowest, sir,  
This summons is a dangerous one.

JOSEPH.

My lord,  
God's kingdom watches over Israel's  
kings.

HEROD.

But Israel's God hath naught to do,  
good uncle,  
With Roman Antony. Look! this com-  
mand  
Is one most sacred.

JOSEPH.

I will keep it, sire,  
As mine own soul.

HEROD.

Then, Joseph, if that Antony  
Doth take my life, do you take Mari-  
amne's;  
For even in death I would not be with-  
out her.

JOSEPH.

Dear my lord—

HEROD.

Say no word. Thou hast thy orders.

JOSEPH.

But kill her, sire?—thy queen, whom  
thou so lovest?

HEROD.

'Tis for that reason I would have her  
slain.

JOSEPH.

But sure, my lord, this is a savage love.

HEROD.

As savage as the heart it quickens. Look,  
sir!  
Thou wilt be faithful?

JOSEPH.

As unto my God.

HEROD.

[*Taking off a ring.*]

Thus, then, I seal thee to me. Wear  
this ring,  
And never look on it but what thou  
thinkest  
Of that which thou art sworn to.

JOSEPH.

I'll remember.

HEROD.

Commend me to my mother and thy  
wife,  
Also to Alexandra and Hyrcanus.  
My queen doth wait for me without.  
Farewell.  
Remember thou art sealed to this.

JOSEPH.

My lord,  
Death will forget ere I do.

HEROD.

Then farewell.

JOSEPH.

[*Exit.*]

How he doth love her! Yet a love more  
cruel  
Than hottest hate. I know not, on my  
soul,  
If Herod's hate or Herod's love be  
crueller.  
Ay, to be Herod's wife were punishment  
Enough for a she-angel grown rebellious,  
Where Lucifer was hurled into a hell.

Sealed to his orders? Sealed unto a  
murder!

Yet he hath ever used me kindly,—ay,  
With trust and courtesy. It is this love,  
Which makes a madman even of a king,  
That hath so spurred him. Now would  
unto heaven

Salome did not so abhor the queen!  
For, though imperious, she is a woman  
To win the liking even of a woman.  
She send her picture to Mark Antony!  
Why, sooner would she scar her won-  
drous beauty

Than so unveil it to the eyes of lust.  
She send the fool of Cleopatra love-  
tokens!

Nay, let the sea turn traitor to the moon  
And fill some reedy pond for love! Well,  
well,

Her innocence doth wait to welcome him  
In Laodicea. [*Exit.*]

*Enter ALEXANDRA and HYRCANUS.*

ALEXANDRA.

What, father! thou art with this Her-  
od too?

Thou think'st him guiltless? Thou canst  
speak of him  
With kindness, and thy only grandson  
dead

At his command? Oh, are there mothers  
in heaven

Who have so suffered upon earth? If  
so,—

If any such there be, to them I kneel,  
To them cry out, to them denounce  
this Herod!

HYRCANUS.

My daughter, thou hast heavy grief to  
bear.

ALEXANDRA.

Help me to bear it, then! Take thou  
thy share,  
And help me to my vengeance! Thou  
art king,  
Thou art the king of Jewry,—not this  
Herod,  
This low-born conqueror, this thief o'  
crowns,  
This son of scorned Antipater! Oh, I  
marvel  
That thou canst eat, and drink, and  
sleep, and wake,

And call thyself Hyrcanus, and yet bear it!

Whence came his greatness? Whence his power? Yea,

And whence his crown? The first two were thy gifts,

The third he stole to show his gratitude! What, sire! wilt thou endure't, wilt sit so calm

While Fortune strips thee to make rich this traitor?

Rise, be a king once more; nay, be a man!

Appeal unto the people; they do love thee.

Resume thy throne, resume thy dignity, Denounce this Herod! Seize this Herod! Slay this Herod!

HYRCANUS.

More gently, good my daughter. I am old.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, old in patience! Make me but thine heir,

And I'll defy him,

HYRCANUS.

Nay, I crave but peace

As pillow for my age. My time to rule Is past, and Time is ruler over me.

Believe me, thou dost somewhat wrong the man.

He is ambitious, but hath not kept all Of this my kingdom.

ALEXANDRA.

What! not all? Not all?

Oh, noble generosity! Not all?

Thy kingdom is thy spouse, and is there beggar

So lost that he would share with any man

His lawful wife? Hyrcanus, O my father,

By thy white hairs I charge thee honour them

And give them back their crown!

HYRCANUS.

Dear daughter, patience.

Had I the wish, the means were not with me.

ALEXANDRA.

Take thou thy part, and God will give thee means.

Oh, would I were Hyrcanus, and a man! Thou soon shouldst see this Herod made a slave!

HYRCANUS.

Hast thou forgot he is thy daughter's husband?

ALEXANDRA.

Forgotten it! Though memory were worn

So full of gaps 'twould not hold yesterday,

That should be recollected! What! forgotten

A Herod's blood doth mingle in the veins That should be clogged with it as with some poison?

That my grandchildren are half Herod? —she,

My child, their willing mother? No, O God!

When I forget this thing, forget Thou me!

*Enter CYPROS and SALOME.*

CYPROS.

Madam, thou dost talk loudly for a palace.

ALEXANDRA.

Madam, thou dost talk pertly for a commoner.

CYPROS.

How! Commoner! The mother of King Herod?

ALEXANDRA.

Common for that, if not a commoner.

CYPROS.

Insolent shrew! dost not thou fear to  
word me?

ALEXANDRA.

Insolent citizen! dost not thou fear  
To word me?

SALOME.

Madam, best you have a care.

HYRCANUS.

Ay, good my daughter, pray you guard  
your tongue.

Who rouses Hate must look for hell  
to follow.

Come with me.

ALEXANDRA.

Nay, not I. Let these go forth,  
If they would not be worded.

CYPROS.

Ay, good my daughter, pray you guard  
your tongue.

Who rouses Hate must look for hell  
to follow.

Come with me.

ALEXANDRA.

Nay, not I. Let these go forth,  
For I will not.

SALOME.

Dost thou insinuate?

CYPROS.

Ay, dost thou dare?

HYRCANUS.

Good Cypros, good Salome,  
Good Alexandra—

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, call evil good!  
It is thy trade, since thou'st called  
Herod generous.

CYPROS.

The king shall hear of this on his return.  
Ay, instantly!

ALEXANDRA.

He hath not yet departed.  
Here is the lawful king of Israel [*points  
to HYRCANUS*],  
And here his daughter.

CYPROS.

Herod shall know of this.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, tell the shoe that the foot chafes  
with it.

Do, gentle commoner; do, citizen;  
Cypros, do.

HYRCANUS.

Oh, daughter, daughter, you do dig a  
pit  
And rush into it.—Please you, madam,  
patience.

CYPROS.

Dost tell me patience? Thou hast heard  
her? Come,  
Salome: if the king be not yet gone,  
He shall have word of this.

SALOME.

Ay, as I live!

[*Exeunt SALOME and CYPROS.*]

HYRCANUS.

Oh, woe is me, my daughter, that my life  
May not glide onward stilly to its silence,  
But thus by words be lashed into a storm  
To toss this frail old bark that bears my  
soul.

Cans't thou not feign a peace, though  
set for war?

Surely thou need'st not use such taunt-  
ing terms

As those with which thou hast just  
heaped the mother  
And sister of the king.

ALEXANDRA.

The king again?  
 And thou dost call him king? More  
     sovereignty  
 There is in this my tender woman's body  
 Then e'er was topped by thy lost diadem.  
 Let us begone. The very air's infected  
 That they have breathed.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE II.

*Before the palace gates.*

MARIAMNE, with her two sons, ALEX-  
 ANDER and ARISTOBULUS.

MARIAMNE.

How long he tarries! Run, my boys,  
     run quickly,  
 And see if ye can glimpse him.

[Exeunt boys.]

This delay  
 Hath signs that make me fearful. What  
     if Cypros  
 Hath poured some falsehood in his  
     jealous ears  
 To poison love? He's here. I'll meet  
 him. Well,

*Enter HEROD.*

At last thou'rt come, my lord.

ALEXANDER.

[Running to his mother.] Oh, mother,  
 mother!  
 He flung me from him, that I tripped  
 and fell!

MARIAMNE.

Herod, was this well done?—Hush,  
     hush, my boy:  
 King's sons weep not for scratches.—  
     Good my lord,  
 Wilt thou not answer?

HEROD.

'Tis a comely boy.  
 Think you that Antony could father  
 better?

MARIAMNE.

Mark Antony? How should I know,  
 my lord?

HEROD.

How shouldst thou know? That's well,  
     that's very well.  
 How shouldst thou know? Ay, ay,  
     there is the riddle  
 The Sphinx hath failed to answer.. 'Tis  
     for that  
 He turns from Egypt for its solving.

MARIAMNE.

Sire,  
 Thou art in merry mood for sad oc-  
     casion.  
 Goest thou in truth to Antony?

HEROD.

Ay, madam.  
 Wilt thou come with me?

MARIAMNE.

No, not if I could.

HEROD.

Ha? Wherefore not?

MARIAMNE.

Because I'm weary, Herod,  
 Of thy fierce humours.

HEROD.

Weary of my humours?  
 Weary of me? Thou wilt confess it,  
     then,  
 Unto my face?

MARIAMNE.

I said not I was weary  
 Of thee, but of thy humours. As to that,  
 When they do touch me only, I can bear  
     them;  
 But when they touch my children, I am  
     roused  
 Above submission. See how thou'st  
     bruised him, sir!  
 And he doth look to thee as unto God,

And loves thee above God,—ay, wor-  
ships thee,—  
And thus thou usest him!

HEROD.

Come to me, boy.  
Thy mother, doth she speak the truth?

ALEXANDER.

Ay, sire,  
My mother always speaks the truth.

HEROD.

So! does she?  
Thou lov'st me, then?

ALEXANDER.

Yes, sire.

HEROD.

With all thy heart?

ALEXANDER.

With all that's not my mother's.

HEROD.

Dost not know  
Herod will not take part of anything?  
Well, tremble not. So! Let me see  
thine eyes:  
What color are they?

ALEXANDER.

Mother saith, like thine.

HEROD.

Ay, doth she? Look! how wouldst thou  
like a brother  
With Roman eyes?

ALEXANDER.

What are they like, my lord?

HEROD.

Like Antony's.

ALEXANDER.

Is that the Antony  
My mother talks of?

HEROD.

Dost thou say so, boy?  
Doth she talk of him? Soft, soft, soft!  
no tears!  
This Antony thy mother talks of,—soft!  
No tears, I tell thee,—come, what doth  
she say  
Of Antony?

ALEXANDER.

That he's a bad, bad Roman,  
Who hath sent here to take thee from  
us.

HEROD.

Hold!  
Look at me. Thou hast honest eyes.

MARIAMNE.

[*Coming forward.*] Ay, Herod,  
And he is honest. Wilt thou doubt thy  
son,  
As well as her who mothered him?—  
Sweet boy,  
Come close to me.—Why should he not  
be honest?  
He is Hyrcanus' grandson, and the son  
Of Mariamne.

HEROD.

Not of Herod?

MARIAMNE.

Now  
Shame on thee, doubting king! I will  
bear all  
But that which slurs my honour. Darest  
thou stand,  
Look in my eyes, and hint me wanton?  
No,  
Thou dost not dare to do it.—Come,  
my sons,  
These are no words to fill your innocent  
ears:  
Bid God-speed to the king your father.

ALEXANDER.

Sire,  
God speed thee on thy journey.



ARISTOBULUS.

God be with thee.

MARIAMNE.

Farewell, my lord. God be with thee  
indeed,  
To mend thy doubting heart.

[Exit with her sons.]

HEROD.

Stay, Mariamne!  
No, I'll not call her back to melt resolve  
With love's quick fire. I will be firm in  
this.  
And yet was guilt ne'er foreheaded like  
that.  
The child, too, said that she named  
Antony  
But to abuse him. Yet that is no proof,  
He may have been instructed so to speak.  
I will proceed unto the truth in person.  
How if it were some trick? My mother  
hates her,—  
Salome too. But then they dared not  
trick me;  
Moreover, they do know that proof  
awaits me  
Whether of their dishonesty or truth.  
Be that as 't may, if she hath sent her  
picture  
Unto Mark Antony, by Israel's God,  
I'll send her to his wanton as a slave!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*Laodicea. A room in ANTONY's house.**Enter ANTONY and HEROD.*

ANTONY.

Nay, say no more about it. I'm content  
Unto the full with what thou'st told me.  
Tut!  
I might have known 'twas woman's bab-  
ble.

HEROD.

Ay,  
These women that are kin to those we  
love!

Methinks that Satan was a married man,  
And his wife's mother egged him to  
rebel,  
Seeing that heaven would not hold them  
both.

ANTONY.

Well said! Well said! Thou hast the  
trick o' humour.  
Thou canst trim old facts with invention,  
sir,  
Until they seem not worn. Thou'lt be  
well missed  
In Laodicea. But look you; it is said  
Arabia doth not give willing tribute.  
How's that?

HEROD.

Thou'st tapped a cedar, Antony,  
And look for it to give forth balsam.

ANTONY.

So?  
Arabia's king is niggardly?

HEROD.

Good sooth,  
As covetous of his gold as Earth her-  
self,  
And tighter holds it.

ANTONY.

So? I have heard as much  
From Cleopatra. What's the tribute?  
Know you?

HEROD.

It was two hundred talents, but of late  
It has been less,—considerably less.

ANTONY.

Less? That's not well,—not well. I  
like not that.  
I have no time to war against Arabia.  
Two hundred talents? That rich coun-  
try's veins  
Could spare ten hundred drops o' gold,  
nor beat  
One pulse-stroke weaker. If there must  
be war—

HEROD.

Well?

ANTONY.

If there must be war, I'll look to thee  
To manage it.

HEROD.

[*Aside.*]

So be it. He shrinks from murder  
Of one alone, but to secure his death  
Would order thousands unto theirs.

ANTONY.

[*Muttering.*]

'Tis pity.

'Tis pity. I'd not have it so. [*Rous-  
ing.*] What say you?

HEROD.

Nothing.

ANTONY.

If there be war, I look to thee,  
Remember.

HEROD.

I'll remember.

ANTONY.

Hold a little,

There are some papers,—those I told  
thee of.

Wait for me here.

[*Exit ANTONY.*]

HEROD.

Thou Roman hypocrite!

Wait for thee? Ay, I'll wait, I'll wait.

Fear not

But that I'll wait. Thou cunning plot-  
maker!

Make war against Arabia? Thou'dst  
make war

Against red hell, if Satan's wife were  
comely.

And yet this man doth take my hand  
and clasp me

His closest friend, speak of the things  
that irk him,

Quote Cæsar freely, whistle Cæsar's  
Rome

Into my Jewish ears, make light or  
serious

As the mood takes him; and doth brood  
withal

O'er schemes to have me butchered.  
Israel's God!

If such is friendship, be not Thou my  
friend!

Here comes the Roman lover o' Jews'  
wives.

*Enter ANTONY.*

ANTONY.

Here are the papers: please you look at  
them:

They can be sealed again. Note this,  
and this,

And this particularly. Is't not strange?  
Here, too, is something strikes me in-  
consistent,

And here again. Dost thou return to-  
day?

I do not willing spare thee.

HEROD.

And I go

Less willingly for thy unwillingness.

When shall I look to welcome thee,  
my lord,

In Jewry?

ANTONY.

Why, ere very long, I trust,  
If all works as I'd have it.

HEROD.

[*Aside.*]

Ay, ay, ay

If all works as thou'dst have it. Verily  
I do believe thee.

ANTONY.

What say'st?

HEROD.

That these errors  
Are strange indeed. Who drew up these  
reports?

ANTONY.

Athenion.

HEROD.

With his own hand?

ANTONY.

I think so.

HEROD.

Best thou madest certain. Then thou'lt  
come to Jewry,  
If all doth work as thou wouldst have  
it, sir?

ANTONY.

Indeed, most joyously.

HEROD.

Be sure o' that.

ANTONY.

What, Herod?

HEROD.

That thou'lt come most joyously.

ANTONY.

Why, I am sure of it.

HEROD.

Sure?

ANTONY.

What's the matter?

Thou makest a mountain of this mole-  
hill.

HEROD.

Ay,

But 'twere a task as difficult, Antony,  
To make a mole-hill of a mountain.

ANTONY.

Well,

Thou'rt in strange mood to-day. And  
thou wilt go?

HEROD.

Ay, Antony.

ANTONY.

I do suspect thee, friend—

HEROD.

Of what?

ANTONY.

Of being somewhat in my plight.  
There is one only difference.

HEROD.

And that?

ANTONY.

Thou callest thy Cleopatra Mariamne.

HEROD.

Antony!

ANTONY.

What! So moved at the mere name?

HEROD.

Not at the name, but at the way of  
naming:  
Name not the wife of Herod and thy  
wanton  
In the same breath.

ANTONY.

How, sir!

HEROD.

Yes, I repeat it,  
And do but ask what I myself fulfil.  
Thou hast ne'er heard me name Octavia  
In such connection.

ANTONY.

By the gods! thy pride  
Would make Jove's throne its footstool!  
Have a care!  
Dost brave me?

HEROD.

Thou mayst call it as thou wilt,  
The fact remains, I will not have my  
queen

Come near thy wanton, even in a sentence.

ANTONY.

Gods, sir!

HEROD.

I know I'm in thy power. Yet, Roman, I've done but what in my place thou hadst done.

ANTONY.

Well—well—well—well. She's fair enough, in truth, To make a lover even of a Herod.

HEROD.

How dost thou know she's fair? By hearsay?

ANTONY.

Ay,  
By hearsay and by demonstration both.  
I have her picture.

HEROD.

[*Calmly and with tightened lips.*]

Ah! thou hast her picture?

ANTONY.

And well done, too. One Procrius, a Greek,  
Hath limned it. I have oft bethought me, sir,  
That thou shouldst have it.

HEROD.

[*More calmly and more rigid.*] Hast thou so, indeed?

ANTONY.

Ay, from the hour I knew it had been sent

By Alexandra, I did purpose to—

HEROD.

By Alexandra! God! by Alexandra?  
Didst thou say Alexandra?

ANTONY.

Ay. What then?

HEROD.

Did Alexandra send it to thee? Speak! Hyrcanus' daughter, Alexandra?

ANTONY.

Ay.

What, man! art going mad?—Without, there! ho!

Wine! Water! Anything to drink! Wine, there!

HEROD.

[*Aside.*] (And I have doubted her, have thought her false, Bid her a cold farewell.) I cry you grace.

Give me to drink some water. No, not wine!

Water, I tell you! 'Tis the air, I think,

The closeness of the day. Notice me not.

The picture, thou dost say, was sent to thee

By Alexandra?

ANTONY.

Ay, by Alexandra.

HEROD.

Dost thou know, Antony, I lied just now?

ANTONY.

Lied?

HEROD.

Lied! I gave thee, friend, to understand That my wife's mother stood not in my love.

ANTONY.

And so thou didst.

HEROD.

Well, hear me, Antony:  
Before the one great God of Israel,  
I dote upon her!

ANTONY.

Well, of all thy moods  
This is the strangest.

HEROD.

Yet the welcomest;  
Look you,—the picture,—can I see it  
now?

ANTONY.

I will go bring it to thee.

HEROD.

I'm thy debtor. [*Exit ANTONY.*]  
Oh, Mariamne, Mariamne, Mariamne!  
Thou shalt set foot upon my neck for  
this,  
Loll on my throne, and take my diadem  
To girdle thee.  
And I did bid her cold farewell, and  
thus  
Am one kiss short for all eternity!  
And the boy, too,—I hurt him. A brave  
boy,  
So proud he would not weep, although  
I gripped him  
To hurt one tougher by a good ten  
years.  
A valiant boy. And she so fierce for  
him;  
Ay, ay, she hurt me well for hurting him.  
Oh, I'll invent some higher name than  
prince  
To give her sons!  
Good Joseph!—he believed in her. Now,  
truth,  
I am half envious of Joseph's goodness.  
But he shall not outdo me after this:  
Herod the king shall as a warning take  
Herod the husband. Yet without a  
cause  
I was not jealous. No, by Jewry's  
throne,  
I was not jealous without cause! My  
mother—  
Ay, but she did not lie in everything.  
No, Alexandra, Alexandra, she—  
Hyrceanus' daughter! Ha! there's mis-  
chief here,  
Though of a different temper. She to  
send  
The picture of my wife to Antony?  
To Antony? Ah, let me think on this!  
This hath, in truth, a twang of treachery,  
False, scheming Jezebel! Yet I'll for-  
give her,  
That 'twas herself, not Mariamne,—  
yea,

Not Mariamne! But she must to  
prison,—  
To prison, for a time at least.

*Enter ANTONY.*

ANTONY.

Here is the picture: it is something  
rough  
In certain parts: a taking roughness,  
though.

HEROD.

Ay, ay, 'tis like, 'tis very like: her eyes  
Unto an eyelash, yet not to an eyelash:  
There's margin here for the imagination  
To make perfection out of, almost. Why  
I like it for its lack o' sleekness, man.  
'Tis only God who can afford to finish!  
'Tis like her, but as sunlight's like the  
sun.  
The color's here, but not the radiance.  
I thank thee, Antony. This thought o'  
thine  
Shall father many deeds. As to Arabia,  
I will do all that thou couldst there de-  
sire:  
Fear not the issue. Now give me the  
papers;  
Thou has not sealed them, though,  
Here is a lamp;  
Despatch, I pray thee, for I must be-  
gone;  
Or shall I seal them?

ANTONY.

Oh, I'll do it for thee.  
Gaze on thy pictured queen in peace  
meantime.  
As to the tribute from Arabia,  
'Tis in thy hands. All such auxiliaries  
As thou didst purpose for my army's  
strengthening,  
Take in this cause if needs be so. These  
papers  
Are now as tight as is my trust in thee,  
And, like that trust, stamped with my  
seal. Commend me  
Unto thy queen, thy mother, and thy  
household;  
Farewell, if thou wilt go.

HEROD.

I must, my friend.  
In everything depend on me.

ANTONY.

I will.

HEROD.

Then, once more thanking thee as to  
this matter,  
The likeness of my queen, farewell.

ANTONY.

Farewell. *[Exit HEROD.]*

'Twas well imagined. Ay, 'twill serve  
a turn.

Fate hath by this woven his very heart-  
strings

Into the pattern of my destiny.

He will remember I returned that pic-  
ture,

Where, otherwise, myself would be for-  
got.

Ah, well, so goes it. Yet, as I'm a  
Roman,

'Twere almost worth my while to turn  
a Jew

Could I by so becoming fall in love  
With mine own lawful spouse. Yet,

after all,  
The Jew's God is a bachelor, therefore

wise  
In that respect above our Roman Jove:

There's nothing quicker rouses envious  
spleen

Than to behold a man who's deep in  
love

With his own wife! *[Exit]*

## SCENE II.

*A room in HEROD's palace.*

*Enter JOSEPH and SALOME.*

JOSEPH.

Ay, madam, I repeat it—I repeat it;  
I know thou art my wife, and I re-  
peat it.

God wot, I know that thou'rt my lawful  
wife,  
And yet I do repeat it. Heaven wit-  
ness

That I remember Cypros is thy mother,  
Thyself my wife Salome, yet again  
I do repeat it: ye are both unjust,  
Unwise, unwomanly, in this your hatred  
Of Noble Mariamne.

SALOME.

Sir, be warned:  
Thou hadst best guard thy tongue.

JOSEPH.

Do thou, then, wife,  
Set me example.

SALOME.

This to me?—to me?

JOSEPH.

This unto any one who hates the queen.  
I say 'twas base in thee to run to Herod  
With this tale of the picture. Ay, more-

over,  
That I will ne'er believe she knew 'twas  
sent,

Till Raphael be commissioned so to say!

SALOME.

Sir, I do tell thee—

JOSEPH.

Madam, I tell thee  
I will not rest till this be set at rights.  
She send her picture to Mark Antony!  
She would as soon have Satan for a  
lover.

Ay, that I'll swear to. She to send her  
picture!

Salome, in God's name—all praise be  
His!

Wherefore, in God's name, as I said,  
do ye,

Your mother and yourself, so hate the  
queen?

SALOME.

Wherefore? Didst say wherefore?  
Thou dost observe her,



Her insolence, her arrogance, her scorn,  
 Her sideward smiles, her upward eye-  
     brows, ay,  
 Her hints and innuendoes, and then ask  
 Wherefore? Away! Thou art so blind  
     with doting  
 Upon this virtuous queen, thou canst not  
     see  
 When she insults thy wife.

JOSEPH.

I can well see  
 When that my wife insults me. Come,  
     be careful:  
 No more o' that.

SALOME.

No more of what?

JOSEPH.

Of that  
 I shame to mention,—how much more  
     to hear!  
 Woman, see that thou dost not drop  
     again  
 Into such wicked hinting. Nay, no  
     word:  
 I will not hear it. God protect the  
     queen  
 From thy tongue's venom! In the mean  
     time, I,  
 Being His servant, will do what I can  
 To keep her happy. Nay, I tell thee,  
     peace.  
 I will not hear so much as one foul  
     word  
 Against Queen Mariamne!

SALOME.

Will not?

JOSEPH.

Will not.

Ay,

SALOME.

Thou wilt not hear me speak? Thou?  
     —thou?  
 Thou wilt not hear me speak?—Salome?  
     —me?  
 Thy wife, and Herod's sister?

JOSEPH.

Herod's self  
 Should not to me insult his queen.

SALOME.

Out, slave!

JOSEPH.

Slave, maybe, but unchained. Therefore  
     be still.  
 Here comes the queen herself.

SALOME.  
 [*Muttering.*]

A crownéd baggage.

*Enter MARIAMNE and her two sons.*

MARIAMNE.

Let us sit here, sweet boys.—Madam,  
     good-morrow.  
 Fair greeting to thee, friend.—Come,  
     Alexander,  
 Bring me thy bow, I'll string it.

SALOME.

Pray you, madam,  
 Whence came that bow?

MARIAMNE.

It was my husband's, madam,  
 When that he was a lad.

SALOME.

° He will ill take it  
 That thou hast fingered o'er his trap-  
     pings thus.

MARIAMNE.

Ah! dost thou think so?—Not so hard,  
     my boy;  
 Set thy knee to it steadily. Now, now,  
 There goes the string! Now see if thou  
     canst bend it.

ALEXANDER.

Almost. 'Tis stiff. Whew! but it stung  
     my wrist!  
 There. Is that better?

JOSEPH.

Good, good, good, my lad!  
Thy father will be boy again to watch  
thee.  
Well done! Well done!

ALEXANDER.

What sayest thou, mother?

MARIAMNE.

Why,  
Well done, indeed, my warrior.

SALOME.

Have care;  
I know thy father's humour, boy. Be-  
ware

Lest thy fine weapon turn into a rod  
For thy chastisement.

ALEXANDER.

Madam, dost thou think  
A son of Herod would be beaten?

SALOME.

Ay,  
If Herod snuffed occasion. Ay, young  
sir,  
I do, most surely.

MARIAMNE.

Then thou art mistaken.  
He is not only Herod's son, but mine.  
Think you I'd see him beaten?

SALOME.

What wouldst do?  
Close thine eyes, girl?

MARIAMNE.

No, but have closed in death  
The eyes of any who did try it.

SALOME.

Ay,  
Were it the king himself. I can believe  
thee.

MARIAMNE.

Thou talkest idly, madam, and beyond  
Thy mark o' freedom.—Come here, pret-  
ty one.

[To ARISTOBULUS.]

Wouldst thou shoot, too?

ARISTOBULUS.

Ay, mother, that I would.  
But that's too big for me.

MARIAMNE.

I'll have one cut, then,  
Fit for thy dainty grasp. How's that,  
my heart?

ARISTOBULUS.

Oh, well, well, well! I will shoot too.  
Oh, ay!

Brother! oh, brother, look, I'm going to  
shoot,

Better than thee! I'm going to kill a  
tiger

And sleep upon his hide. And then  
another;

That shall be mother's. Then another  
yet

For Uncle Joseph. Uncle, wouldst thou  
like it?

Thou wilt not mind the hole my arrow  
makes,

Wilt thou? Look, uncle, big as this.  
Look, mother,

As big as this!

MARIAMNE.

Sweet chatterer, come here.  
Thou'rt treading on thy aunt Salome's  
robe.

SALOME.

What's that? Let him tread on. His  
mother, truth,

Sets foot upon my neck: then why not  
he

Upon my garments? Go on, boy, go on.

ALEXANDER.

Why, what's the matter, aunt? What  
has he done?

SALOME.

What is the matter? Out, thou bab-  
bling brat!  
I'll answer thee. [*Cuffs him.*]

MARIAMNE.

[*Seizing her wrist and swinging her to  
her knees by a sudden movement.*]

Ask thou his pardon, there.  
Do as I bid thee. It were best for thee.  
Look in my eyes, and thou wilt know  
'twere best  
For thee and thine that thou obeyed'st  
me! Quick,  
His pardon.

SALOME.

[*As if cowed.*] Well, I ask it, then.

MARIAMNE.

More, more.  
Say, "Alexander, son of Mariamne,  
I crave thy pardon with all humbleness."  
Say it!

SALOME.

I say it.

MARIAMNE.

Woman, speak those words!  
Speak!

SALOME.

Alexander, son of Mariamne.  
I crave thy pardon.

MARIAMNE.

With all humbleness.

SALOME.

Well, with all humbleness.

MARIAMNE.

Now crave thou mine.

JOSEPH.

Nay, madam.

MARIAMNE.

Crave thou mine!

SALOME.

[*Sneeringly.*] Ay, Joseph, plead!

MARIAMNE.

Crave thou my pardon, woman!

SALOME.

Well, I crave it. [*Rising to her feet.*]  
But better for thee hadst thou cursed  
high heaven  
Than dared Salome's vengeance!

[*Exit.*]

JOSEPH.

Good madam, if it had been possible,  
I would thou hadst left this undone.

MARIAMNE.

Good uncle,  
In that she is thy wife, with all my heart  
I wish so too. But it was written so.  
Think on't no more. Thou hast my  
trust and love  
In everything save in thy spouse, good  
uncle.  
I cannot feign. Therein is my chief  
fault—  
Or virtue, as you will.—Look, little one,  
Go with thine uncle: he will see thy  
bow  
Doth suit thee.

ARISTOBULUS.

Wilt thou truly, uncle dear?

JOSEPH.

Ay, that I will. Come on.—Sweet niece,  
I thank thee.

[*Exit ARISTOBULUS and JOSEPH.*]

ALEXANDER.

Mother, I loved thee when thou flungest  
her down!

How strong thou art! Oh, thou art  
 very queen  
 Without thy diadem, as night is night  
 Without the stars. Sweet mother!

MARIAMNE.

Ah, my boy,

Thou dost not know—

ALEXANDER.

What, mother?

MARIAMNE.

[*Absently.*]

What it is

To be a Herod's wife.

ALEXANDER.

How dost thou mean?

MARIAMNE.

[*As if to herself.*]

Doubted at every turn,—insulted, braved  
 By those who most should cherish me,—  
 my children  
 Subject to slights which I could better  
 bear,  
 My mother scorned, her father set at  
 naught,  
 And I not even queen over his moods.

ALEXANDER.

What art thou saying, mother? Please  
 remember  
 That which thou saidst thou'dst tell me.

MARIAMNE.

What, dear?

ALEXANDER.

Why,

How thou first saw'st my father! How  
 he threw  
 The javelin! how rode the Arab horse!  
 Oh, thou dost know. Wilt thou not  
 tell me now?

MARIAMNE.

How I first saw thy father?

ALEXANDER.

Ay. Please do it.

MARIAMNE.

It is so long ago.

ALEXANDER.

Oh, mother, please!

Don't say thou hast forgotten it, sweet  
 mother!

Think!

MARIAMNE.

God in heaven! it is the one last thing  
 That I would do. Nay, never heed me,  
 child;

I do remember what thou'dst have. So,  
 then,

Sit there. How like, how like thine eyes  
 are, sweet,

Unto thy father's! Well, I'll on. Let's  
 see:

How was it, now? His very trick o' lip.  
 Well, well, I'll tell thee. 'Twas a sum-  
 mer day,

And I a maid of Spring. Canst thou  
 think, boy,

Of me as being some sweet little maid  
 Such as thou'lt some day woo and mar-  
 ry?

ALEXANDER.

Nay,

I will not wed her unless she be in truth  
 Thy very copy as thou art this instant.

MARIAMNE.

Oh, darling! thy old mother?

ALEXANDER.

Old! Thou old?

But tell the story, for thou shalt not  
 tease me.

MARIAMNE.

'Twas Nisan, then, a day o' cloud and  
 shine,

Yet all the clouds condensed would  
 scarce have dyed

One o' thy swarthy locks. There was a  
 festival,

And there were promised many feats of strength

And skill in various ways, especially  
Casting the javelin. Thou knowest, sweet,

Samaria was my home, the lovely "vale  
Of many waters,"—so they call it. Oh  
To see the great pomegranate-trees in bloom

Once more—but once! It was in very truth

As though the heart's blood of the year  
had stained them.

I'm coming to thy father! I was then  
Affianced to him only, ne'er had seen  
Even his pictured face, and greatly feared  
To think of how he might appear. At last,

When almost we were tired o' watching youths

Draw bows or brandish spears, he came.  
His horse,

A coal-black Arab, trapped in beaten gold,

As though dark Night had borrowed of  
bright Day,  
Chafed at the reins and reared. At that the king,

Herod, thy father, dashed his mighty fist  
Against the brute's strained crest, then,  
loosing rein,

Poised lithely, with his javelin aloft,  
Keen on the changing air. Onward  
they swooped,

Straight on, with singing hair and hoofs  
a-thunder.

Like to a wind made visible.

ALEXANDER.

On, mother!  
Tell me the rest! Please, mother!  
mother! mother!  
Don't stop to think of it! Tell me the rest!

MARIAMNE.

He cast the javelin. The severed air  
Shrieked with its wound, and, lo! the  
last shot arrow

That marked the target quivered, cleft  
in twain

By that sure-hurléd blade.

ALEXANDER.

He cleft the arrow?—  
The shaft itself? Oh, mother, dost thou think  
I could so cast a javelin some day?  
Not now, but when I'm bigger? Dost thou think it?

MARIAMNE.

I know not if thou couldst excel withal  
To such extent as did thy father, dear:  
He is world-honored for such feats.

But, truth,  
I think thou couldst in part approach his skill.

Thou hast his very swing o' carriage.

ALEXANDER.

Well,  
What next? What did he then?

MARIAMNE.

Leaped from his horse  
And caught me in his arms.

*Enter HEROD.*

HEROD.

As he doth now!  
What! trembling? Oh, my queen! my wife! my life!  
Tremble no more! Give me thy lips!  
Look up!  
Nay, sweet, look down. [*Kneeling.*]  
Here is my rightful place;  
Here let me kneel forever!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, my lord.  
Thy place is something higher, for 'tis here.

[*Touching her heart.*]

HEROD.

Then lift me to it, for I dare not rise  
Of my sole self unto such happiness.

MARIAMNE.

[*Lifting him.*] Come, then.

HEROD.

Oh, God! to love like this is pain.  
Give me thy shoulder for a moment,  
sweet,  
All of me that's not Herod is in mine  
eyes.

MARIAMNE.

And all that's Herod or not Herod, love,  
Is in my heart.

HEROD.

[*Taking her face into his hands.*]

In nothing changed: the same  
Deep, maddening eyes; lips curled for  
love; rich locks  
That tempt the fingers. Ay, the same,  
the same,  
Even to that flutter in thy throat when  
touched,  
As though thy heart were some wild,  
wingéd thing  
That struggled to be free. Wild heart,  
I'll kiss thee  
For being wild. [*Kisses her throat.*]

MARIAMNE.

Ah, Herod! ah, thy corselet!—  
It cuts my arm.

HEROD.

Let my lips plead its pardon.

[*Kissing her shoulder.*]

God's heart, girl, thou art twenty times  
more sweet  
Than all thy dear Samaria's sun-kissed  
fruits.  
Thy lips! Once more thy lips!—thy  
lips!—thy lips!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, Herod! Herod! thou forgett'st the  
boy.  
This is not seemly.

HEROD.

Ho! Not seemly, say'st thou?  
Herod and seemly harnessed, were as  
well  
As were a tiger lashed unto a dove.

MARIAMNE.

Yet doves, the Greeks do tell us, draw  
Love's chariot.

HEROD.

The chariot of Love's queen. The king  
of love  
Guides heel-wing'd tigers with a sword  
of flame.  
Talk not to me of doves: it is as though  
One little, milk-white cloud did near the  
blaze  
Of some red sunset. Heaven is in my  
heart  
Because of thee,—but heaven on fire.  
Look, boy;  
Come to my knee. Thou art a well-knit  
lad:  
Wouldst learn to cast the javelin?

ALEXANDER.

Oh, father!

HEROD.

That's well,—that's well. Ay, call me  
father, boy:  
I like it better than more stately terms  
From thy young lips.—He hath thy  
brows, my queen.

MARIAMNE.

Nay, thine—unto a hair.

HEROD.

Why, heart, look here:  
For th' dark original of this proud arch  
I first did love thee. Mine? Thou  
knowest well  
Those were ne'er copied from my shaggy  
front.—  
Look thou, to-morrow ere the sun be  
high  
I'll teach thee how to cast a javelin.

ALEXANDER.

Sire!



HEROD.

Nay, father, or no javelin.

ALEXANDER.

Dear father!

HEROD.

Thou rogue! that knack o' sweetness,  
 without question,  
 Was from thy mother gotten. Well,  
 come kiss me.  
 Now off.

ALEXANDER.

Ay, father. Mother dear, farewell!

[Exit.]

HEROD.

Now to my lips!

MARIAMNE.

My lord.

HEROD.

Nay, do not speak.

MARIAMNE.

I cannot breathe.

HEROD.

Ah, peace!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, let me breathe.

HEROD.

Presently, by and by. Why, struggle  
 not.  
 I would not hurt thee.

MARIAMNE.

But thou dost,—thou dost.  
 Thou art so strong thou dost not know.

HEROD.

Well, there.  
 Come lean against me. Look! what  
 thinkest thou  
 That I have here? [*Touching his breast.*]

MARIAMNE.

I cannot think.

HEROD.

But try,  
 To please me. Come.

MARIAMNE.

A lock of hair?

HEROD.

Ay, that,  
 Since first I loved thee; but there's  
 something else.

MARIAMNE.

Indeed I cannot think what 'tis.

HEROD.

[*Taking out picture.*]

Why, here,—  
 What dost thou think o' this?

MARIAMNE.

Why, 'tis myself!  
 When didst thou have it done? And  
 where? By whom?  
 Am I as fair as that?

HEROD.

Is moonlight fair  
 As starlight?

MARIAMNE.

Nay, my eyes are not so large.

HEROD.

Larger.

MARIAMNE.

Oh, Herod, no! And see what lips!

HEROD.

I'd rather feel them. Nay, shrink not,  
shrink not:  
Thou dost not know how't chafes me  
when thou shrinkest.

MARIAMNE.

I will not, then. Who painted it?

HEROD.

A Greek  
Named Procrius. Here, take it in thy  
hands.

'Tis well done, is it not? [*Aside.*] She  
is as true

To me as I was false to her. I'd swear  
By every goddess in the Roman heaven  
That she ne'er eyed that picture in her  
life.

Ay, 'twas all Alexandra. God of Israel!  
Would to Thy mercy that, like Adam's  
wife,

All others could be mothered by a rib!

MARIAMNE.

[*Coming towards him.*]

It is most wondrous.  
In truth, my love, it gladdens me at  
heart

That thou'st so good a copy of myself,  
To help remembrance when thou'rt ab-  
sent.

HEROD.

Nay,  
Memory needs no aid from Mariamne.  
But how thinkest thou I got this picture?

MARIAMNE.

Truth,  
It is beyond me.

HEROD.

Whose dost think it was  
Ere it was mine?

MARIAMNE.

I cannot dream.

HEROD.

Why, then—  
Mark Antony's.

MARIAMNE.

Mark Antony's! Thou jestest.

HEROD.

I do not jest. Thy mother sent this  
picture  
Unto Mark Antony.

MARIAMNE.

No! no! Why should she?

HEROD.

I know not; but for no good,—that I  
know.

MARIAMNE.

What wilt thou do?

HEROD.

Thou knowest as well as I  
That for offence so grave imprisonment  
Were a light punishment.

MARIAMNE.

Ah, for my sake  
Forgive her. Thou dost know how rash  
she is,—

How hot o' temper. 'Twas a crime,  
indeed.

To bare my face unto the Roman's  
eyes;

But I, who bare my very soul to thee,  
Do crave her pardon. Look, my lord, I  
kneel.

HEROD.

No, by my soul! thou never shalt bend  
knee

To any save thy God. She was forgiven  
At thy first asking.

MARIAMNE.

Now thou'rt king indeed,—  
Now Herod at his best.

HEROD.

Come, prove it, then,  
Upon my lips.—Who comes?

*Enter JOSEPH and ARISTOBULUS.*

ARISTOBULUS.

*[Brandishing a little bow and arrow.]*

Oh, mother, look! look! look! *[Seeing the king.]* Oh, uncle!

HEROD.

Soft!  
Come here, boy. Why, thou art most  
bravely weaponed.  
Canst bend that monstrous bow?—Good  
uncle, greeting.

JOSEPH.

I knew not thou wert back, my lord,  
indeed.  
When didst thou come?

HEROD.

Why, some few moments gone.  
Uncle, I would have word with thee.—  
My love,  
Farewell until this interview be o'er,  
Wait for me in our chamber.

MARIAMNE.

Ay, my lord.  
Come, little archer.

*[Exit with ARISTOBULUS.]*

HEROD.

Good uncle, thou wert right in all thou  
saidst:  
The mother of my queen, and not her-  
self,  
Did send her picture to Mark Antony.

JOSEPH.

Praise be to God for this! And, good  
my lord,  
Let it be long ere thou again dost doubt  
her.

HEROD.

Is never long enough?

JOSEPH.

Ay, if thou'rt serious.  
But close thine ears against the slanders,  
sire,  
My wife and thine own mother are most  
sure  
Again to bring thee.

HEROD.

Death's not deafer, sir,  
Than I will be.

JOSEPH.

Nor let looks stir thee.

HEROD.

None,  
As I am king.

JOSEPH.

As thou art man!

HEROD.

Ay, then,  
As I am man. Not one, not one. Rest,  
uncle;  
I will be staunch. But look you, sir:  
what object  
Dost think Hyrcanus' daughter had in  
this?

JOSEPH.

Nay, I know not. Some woman's mud-  
dle, surely.  
Thou'lt not stir up dissension when 'tis  
napping,  
For such small cause?

HEROD.

Small cause, say you? Small cause!  
Just heaven! it hath never seemed so  
great  
As by this "small" o' thine. Small  
cause, that she,  
My queen, hath been unveiled unto the  
eyes  
That are a wanton's daily mirrors! Oh,  
Small cause had God to punish Lucifer,  
If that my cause against this shrew be  
small!

JOSEPH.

What wilt thou, then?

HEROD.

I would have 'prisoned her,  
But that my queen did plead against it,  
sir.—  
Unto less heart-near matters: Antony  
Has given Cœlosyria to his jade.

JOSEPH.

That's better for Judea than for Antony.  
Sawest Cleopatra while in Laodicea?

HEROD.

Ay. How she hates me!

JOSEPH.

Thou wert safer, nephew,  
In Cleopatra's hate than in her love.

HEROD.

Ay, but she works against me.

[Enter CYPROS.]

Greeting, mother.  
How dost thou?

CYPROS.

Well in body, but in mind  
Something less easy. Sir, I crave your  
leave.

[Aside.]

Bid him go forth. I have some news for  
thee.

HEROD.

Is it so musty now it will not keep?

CYPROS.

It doth concern Hyrcanus' daughter,  
Herod,  
If thou'st no care to hear it, I will go.

HEROD.

Nay, stay. Of Alexandra? I will hear  
it,—  
Uncle, thy leave.

JOSEPH.

Nephew, thy promise.

HEROD.

Ay,  
I will remember.

JOSEPH.

Heaven aid thee, then!  
[Exit.]

HEROD.

Mother, thou art not in my love just  
now.

How camest thou to state so falsely,  
madam,

This matter of the picture?

CYPROS.

Good my son,  
How dost thou mean?

HEROD.

Thou knewest all the while  
Hyrcanus' daughter sent it,—not my  
wife.

CYPROS.

Nay, Herod, as I live. But how dost  
know  
'Twas only Alexandra?

HEROD.

That's not matter.  
Suffice it that I know. What's this thou  
saidst  
Thou hadst to tell me?

CYPROS.

While that thou wast gone,  
Reports did reach us thou wert slain by  
Antony;

Whereon this woman strove to coax thy  
uncle  
That he would set forth straightway  
from Judea  
And seek protection with the 'Roman  
legion.

HEROD.

She did?

CYPROS.

Ay, by my soul!

HEROD.

Thou hast once lied:  
How shall I know if once thou speakest  
truth?

CYPROS.

Here comes Salome: ask her.

HEROD.

Hath Salome  
The writ of truth about her?

[Enter SALOME.]

Look you, sister,  
What of this flying to the Roman en-  
signs?

SALOME.

True.

HEROD.

Wilt thou swear it?

SALOME.

Ay.

HEROD.

God knows ye women  
Would swear hell heaven, to win the  
devil over.  
How shall I know?

CYPROS.

Ask Joseph.

SALOME.

Nay, not Joseph.

HEROD.

Why not?

SALOME.

Because he would swear wet were dry,  
To win one smile from thy chaste  
queen.

HEROD.

What meanest thou?

SALOME.

But what I said.

HEROD.

Why saidst thou "my chaste queen"?

SALOME.

Is she not chaste?

HEROD.

Softly! No insolence!  
Why should I not ask Joseph?

SALOME.

Ask him, then:  
'Tis naught to me.

HEROD.

But 'tis not naught to me!  
Woman, give word. Why dost thou  
simper? Speak!  
What dost thou smirk at?

SALOME.

Why, at mine own thoughts.

HEROD.

Are they so merry?—Mother, dost thou  
know  
Why thus she Josephs me?

CYPROS.

'Tis not unnatural  
A wife should feel some jealousy when—

HEROD.

Ay,  
When what? This 'what's' the thing.  
Sister, have care,—  
Have care: I am more Mariamne's hus-  
band  
Than I'm thy brother.

SALOME.

Think'st thou that is news?

HEROD.

Then answer.

SALOME.

I have answered.

HEROD.

Trifle not.  
What dost thou hint at?

SALOME.

Hinting's not my way.  
Thank God, I have the courage to be  
honest.

HEROD.

Then demonstrate it. What didst mean  
just now,  
By saying that Joseph would swear wet  
were dry,  
To win a smile from Mariamne?

SALOME.

Why,  
That he would do it. There's no mys-  
tery there.

HEROD.

Pernicious vixen! I'd not husband thee  
Though on our wedding-day I were to  
pose

God of the hundredth heaven! What  
dost thou mean,  
Thou smirking obstinacy? Speak, I  
say!  
If that thou dost not word it o' the' in-  
stant,  
I'll give thy vaunted courage work to  
do.

SALOME.

If thou wouldst hear thy shame told as  
a tale,  
Pardon me if I would not so hear mine.

HEROD.

My shame and thine? My shame?  
Have care! have care!  
Herod is Herod, though ten times a  
brother.  
My shame? My shame? My shame?  
Ay, let thy blood  
Forswear thy poisonous lips, as that of  
thee  
In my hot veins forswears thy poison-  
ous self.  
Mother, begone! we'll have this out  
alone.  
No word! Depart! [Exit CYPROS.]  
Now, woman.

SALOME.

Why dost glare?  
'Tis not my fault.

HEROD.

Fault? Fault? Who spoke of fault?  
Just now 'twas shame. Well, shame's  
a fault, that's true.  
And faults are shameful when found  
out. Come, hasten,  
Madam, this matter.

SALOME.

[Pulling out a bracelet.]

Hast thou e'er seen this?

HEROD.

Ah, 'tis the bracelet I gave Mariamne  
At our betrothal. Jade, how didst thou  
get it?  
She wears it ever on her left arm.



SALOME.

Nay,

Did wear,—not wears it.

HEROD.

Girl, where didst thou find it?

SALOME.

In Joseph's closet.

HEROD.

May that lie thrice damn thee!  
 What! thou wouldst have me think—oh,  
 devilish harpy!—  
 Have I e'er called thee sister? Look,  
 Salome,  
 If thou hast jested, I'll forgive thee.

SALOME.

Nay,

If I had jested, I would not forgive  
 Myself.

HEROD.

Oh, devil!—devil!

SALOME.

Why, just powers!  
 Let me begone ere that I am quite  
 murdered  
 For doing what's my duty.

HEROD.

Move no step  
 Until I wring that poisonous mind o'  
 thine  
 Of its last drop. Thou say'st thou  
 found'st this bracelet  
 Within thy husband's closet?

SALOME.

Ay.

HEROD.

Then thou  
 Didst steal and put it there!

SALOME.

Brother!

'HEROD.

I say,  
 If thou didst find the bracelet of my  
 wife  
 In Joseph's closet, thou didst steal it  
 thence  
 And put it there for reasons of thine  
 own!

SALOME.

Herod!

HEROD.

Ay, that's the name of Jewry's king.  
 Doth any dare to brave him who doth  
 bear it?  
 Look you, if this be false,—nay, it is  
 false,—  
 Why, mark you, then; if when I show  
 this bracelet  
 Unto my queen, with word of thy foul  
 slander,—  
 If, when I tell her this, she pleads not  
 for thee,  
 To have thee pardoned, dear as is this  
 toy  
 For all the memories that it doth enring,  
 I'll have it beaten to an arrow head,  
 And 'send it through thy false and  
 shrivelled heart  
 With mine own hand!

[Exit.]

SALOME.

Accurséd be ye both!

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*A room in HEROD'S Palace.**Enter MARIAMNE and ALEXANDRA.*

MARIAMNE.

Mother, I do but ask thee be advised.

ALEXANDRA.

Thou dost but ask me be advised? Indeed!

So thou dost only ask me be advised?

Well, am I not a docile, patient mother?  
 A gentle, good, obedient, humble queen?  
 Thou ask'st me be advised! Now, let a  
 babe  
 Advise its mother how to suckle it,—  
 The stars grow independent, and turn  
 back  
 Upon their courses to instruct high God  
 How they should move,—earth rail at  
 heaven's method,—  
 The entire and changeless system change  
 about,  
 Until at last the nations rule their kings,  
 Not kings their nations! Thou advise  
 me!

MARIAMNE.

Madam,  
 Thou must acknowledge that it was not  
 seemly  
 To send my picture to the Roman gen-  
 eral.  
 What purpose hadst thou?

ALEXANDRA.

What is that to thee,  
 Since 'twas unseemly? Thou wouldst  
 not seek, surely,  
 To learn unseemly matters?

MARIAMNE.

Good my mother,  
 Wilt thou not see that all my care in  
 this  
 Hath been to place thee beyond scorn or  
 danger?  
 Thou ran'st a risk almost as terrible  
 As when thou soughtest to convey thy-  
 self  
 And Aristobulus to Cleopatra  
 Concealed in perforated coffins.

ALEXANDRA.

Risk!  
 What risk? Of what?

MARIAMNE.

Of being imprisoned.

ALEXANDRA.

I?—  
 I be imprisoned?—I?—Hyrchanus' daugh-  
 ter?—  
 The sometime queen of this usurping  
 king?

MARIAMNE.

Mother, have care.

ALEXANDRA.

He to imprison me?  
 He—Herod—to imprison Alexandra?  
 Out! I will not believe it.

MARIAMNE.

Best thou didst.

ALEXANDRA.

What! thou wouldst suffer it?

MARIAMNE.

To be a queen  
 Doth mean to suffer many things, good  
 mother;  
 And who should know this better than  
 thyself?

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, who indeed, O God!

MARIAMNE.

Then for my sake  
 Be warned in time. For there may  
 come an hour  
 When even Mariamne'll plead in vain.

ALEXANDRA.

What wouldst thou?

MARIAMNE.

Be but careful. Make no plans  
 To follow secret ways. Thou knowest  
 well  
 Thou'rt watched at every turn.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, well I know it.  
 But what's more exquisite than by thy  
 skill  
 To make the watcher watch in vain,—  
 outwit him,—  
 Baffle him utterly?

MARIAMNE.

But recollect  
How thou hast ever failed unto this  
moment.

ALEXANDRA.

We must thrice fail to be successful  
once.  
I have once more to fail.

MARIAMNE.

Believe me, mother,  
That "once" might never live to breed  
success.  
Here comes the king. I'll ask thee now  
to go;  
'Twere best he did not now see us to-  
gether.

ALEXANDRA.

I'll think of what thou'st said, but will  
not promise.  
No promises. [Exit.]

MARIAMNE.

She is my body's mother,  
And yet she seems as daughter to my  
soul.  
Oh, would to God that she would be  
advised!  
There's something ominous to me of  
late  
In very silence, and my urgent heart  
Cries, "Herod! Herod! Herod!" till  
the night  
Is vibrant with his name. Would unto  
God  
I knew to what extent he loveth me,  
Or could but sift his passion through  
his love  
And note how much the one outweighs  
the other!  
Joseph doth hold unto the theory  
That he doth cherish me above ambition;  
And yet I doubt:—men so oft love the  
pleasure  
Above the pleasure giver. Love lives  
on trifles,  
And we can lose him wholly with an  
eye,  
A broken tooth, an arm, our tresses'  
gold.

How if some day this face which now  
he worships  
Were by some grievous accident scarred  
o'er,  
Made hideous? How if mine eyes were  
blurred  
By some fierce, sudden blight?—my fig-  
ure mangled?  
How if—oh, God!—I were a leper?  
Then—  
Would he then love me? Nay, a leprous  
soul  
Were easier borne of men than that  
one lock  
Should lose its beauty! Yet, withal, how  
Joseph  
Doth dwell upon his constancy! Good  
Joseph!  
His wife's the only evil thing about  
him.  
Good, faithful Joseph!

Enter HEROD.

HEROD.

Madam, I am come.  
Is Joseph here?

MARIAMNE.

No. Dost thou wish for him?  
I'll have him called.

HEROD.

Nay, but I heard his name;  
I'm sure I heard his name.

MARIAMNE.

Why, so thou didst:  
I spoke of him.

HEROD.

Spoke of him? What of him?  
Do thy thoughts oft run Joseph-wards?

MARIAMNE.

Indeed they do, my lord.

HEROD.

Ha!

MARIAMNE.

I am certain, sir,  
He is the faithfulest of those about thee.

HEROD.

The faithfullest?

MARIAMNE.

Ay. Why dost thou so stare?

HEROD.

Know'st thou this bracelet?

MARIAMNE.

Oh! where didst thou find it?  
Thank God 'tis found! How strange  
that thou shouldst find it!

HEROD.

Strange?

MARIAMNE.

Ay. What then?

HEROD.

Wherefore is it so strange  
That I should find thy bracelet?

MARIAMNE.

'Twas my thought,—  
My woman's way o' conjuring coinci-  
dence  
Out of a leaf-fall. I did say 'twas  
strange  
Because it is the bracelet thou didst  
give me  
At our betrothal. Aristobulus  
Did slip it from mine arm this very  
morn  
While playing, and I have not seen it  
since,  
Though every servant hath been er-  
randed  
Throughout the palace to make search  
for it.

HEROD.

Where is the boy?

MARIAMNE.

With Joseph.

HEROD.

Is there none  
Save Joseph to amuse him?

MARIAMNE.

Nay, thine uncle  
Doth love our boys.

HEROD.

And our boys' mother,—yes.

MARIAMNE.

I think he doth. He is the only one  
Of all thy household who is civil to me.

HEROD.

Insinuations?

MARIAMNE.

Dost insinuate  
That I insinuate?

HEROD.

Why not? thou art—  
A woman.

MARIAMNE.

And a queen.

HEROD.

By heaven, thou lookest it!  
See that thou act it, too. Have the boy  
called.

MARIAMNE.

Who?—Aristobulus?

HEROD.

Ay.

MARIAMNE.

Wherefore, sir?

HEROD.

Have the boy called, I say.

MARIAMNE.

I pray you, Herod,  
If that he hath offended,—if (more like)  
Thy sister and thy mother have borne  
tales  
Concerning him—

HEROD.

Away!

MARIAMNE.

If thou'st been urged  
To harshly deal with him, do not, I  
pray thee.

HEROD.

Peace!

MARIAMNE.

He's so young, so frail, so timorous,  
So fearful of thee.

HEROD.

It were well his mother  
Took lesson by that last. Call him, I  
say.

MARIAMNE.

And I, that I will not, unless thyself  
Dost tell me why thou wishest him.

HEROD.

Thou wilt not?  
—Without, there!

[Enter Servant.]

Tell the young prince Aristobulus  
To wait on me immediately. Hasten!

MARIAMNE.

If 'tis thy purpose to ungently use him,  
Myself shall stand between ye!

Enter ARISTOBULUS.

Come, my heart;  
None shall entreat thee.

ARISTOBULUS.

Is he angry with me?

MARIAMNE.

I know not; but he shall not hurt thee.

HEROD.

Boy,  
When didst thou have this bracelet?

MARIAMNE.

Ah!

ARISTOBULUS.

This morning.—  
Oh, mother, who did find it? I'm so  
glad!  
Did the king find it, mother?

MARIAMNE.

I know not.

HEROD.

Where didst thou have it last?

ARISTOBULUS.

I don't remember.

HEROD.

Thou dost not?

ARISTOBULUS.

No. I think—

HEROD.

Well, out with it!  
What dost thou think?

ARISTOBULUS.

I think my uncle Joseph  
Took us into his chamber, and I think—  
I think—I think—

HEROD.

Gods! what dost stammer at?  
I will not eat thee.

MARIAMNE.

Thou dost eye him so.

HEROD.

What, then! shall I not look at mine  
own son?

What is it that thou thinkest, boy?

ARISTOBULUS.

I dropped it. 'Twas there

HEROD.

Come to me.

ARISTOBULUS.

Oh, mother!

HEROD.

Come.

MARIAMNE.

Nay, go, my boy.—If thou dost hurt  
him, Herod,  
From that same moment I'm no more  
thy wife!

HEROD.

So be it, then—Come to me, boy. Now  
up,—

Up for a kiss. Here, take this chain  
with thee:

'Twill make as bright a plaything as  
the bracelet.

Now, dost thou love me?

ARISTOBULUS.

I—I—think so. Oh!

I mean, I do. Don't hurt me. Put me  
down.

HEROD.

Go, then.

ARISTOBULUS.

May I go, mother?

MARIAMNE.

Ay.

*Exit* ARISTOBULUS.

HEROD.

My queen,  
Come, let me new-betroth thee.

MARIAMNE.

First, my lord,  
Tell me the meaning of this most  
strange scene  
Through which we have just gone.

HEROD.

For what wouldst know?

MARIAMNE.

For that I am thy wife and Jewry's  
queen.  
Thinkest thou, my lord, that thou canst  
'doubt me—ay,  
In any way—and that I'll meekly bear  
it?  
I tell thee thou hadst better doubt thy-  
self  
Ten thousand times than Mariamne  
once!

HEROD.

I do not doubt thee.

MARIAMNE.

Thou hast doubted me;  
And once to doubt is ever to be doubt-  
ful.  
Thinkest thou I did not mark the hid-  
den meaning  
With which thou didst enweigh the boy's  
least word,—  
How thou didst question and cross-  
question him,  
Frighten, soothe, frown, and smile all  
in an instant?  
Why didst thou summon him—my child,  
my last-born—  
To answer what his mother had replied  
to?



Ay, wherefore didst thou that? And  
 as thou entered'st,  
 Why didst thou eye me when I spoke of  
 Joseph?  
 There's more in all of this than Joseph  
 only.  
 Can it be Joseph's wife?

HEROD.

How if it were?

MARIAMNE.

Then farewell happiness, farewell peace,  
 hope,  
 Life, joy, content,—ay, Herod, fare thee  
 well!

HEROD.

How dost thou mean?

MARIAMNE.

If Herod once hath listened,  
 Unto Salome, Death may wed with Life  
 Ere Mariamne be again a queen!

HEROD.

Why, what dost mean?

MARIAMNE.

That thy trust was my throne,  
 Thy love my sceptre, and thy faith my  
 crown.  
 Shall I be queen and yet despoiled of  
 these?—  
 A beggar of small favors in the kingdom  
 Where I was wont to reign? Not I!—  
 O God!  
 I'd rather be Thy humblest slave, than  
 queen  
 Unto a king whom a Salome rules!

HEROD.

Nay, Mariamne.

MARIAMNE.

Am I Mariamne,  
 And yet my child made witness 'gainst  
 me? Mariamne,

And yet Salome heard before me?  
 Mariamne,  
 And yet by Herod doubted?

HEROD.

By my kingdom,  
 I do not doubt thee.

MARIAMNE.

Then why brought'st my child  
 To prove me? Yea, if that the flesh  
 were false  
 From whence he sprung, why should he  
 be more true?  
 How didst thou know 'twere not a les-  
 son taught,  
 That guiltiness might look like in-  
 nocence?

Who is there in the breadth of Israel  
 To prove that Mariamne is not false?

HEROD.

Herself! He who could meet thine eyes  
 and doubt thee  
 Would prove himself the very core of  
 falseness!

MARIAMNE.

He who Salome trusts doubts Mariamne.  
 Thou canst not both believe in Jove and  
 Jah:  
 Honor to one doth mean to one dis-  
 honor,—  
 For one a throne, for one a sepulchre.

HEROD.

Madam, I swear to thee.

MARIAMNE.

Swear unto God:  
 His throne is sure.

HEROD.

No surer than thine own.

MARIAMNE.

Then heaven's kingdom rocks.

HEROD.

Nay, be assured.

MARIAMNE.

Of what? Of my abasement? Would  
to God

I were as sure of ultimate content!

HEROD.

Nay, Mariamne, hear me. Let me speak.  
I never was suspicious without cause.

MARIAMNE.

And such a cause!

HEROD.

Why, there was reason in't.

MARIAMNE.

One grain of reason leavens a huge  
mass

Of inconsistency. Of what, my lord,  
Am I suspected?

HEROD.

I was told to-day  
This bracelet had been found in Joseph's  
closet.

MARIAMNE.

What if it had? What then? In  
Joseph's closet?

What if it had been found in Joseph's  
closet?

HEROD.

Why, sure thou seest where conclusion  
points?

MARIAMNE.

He points into a blackness where mine  
eyes

Are sensible of naught but blackness.

HEROD.

Why,  
Thou knowest how mine uncle worships  
thee,  
Is ever ready to defend or serve thee,  
Doth in the least thing find thee love-  
worthy.

MARIAMNE.

And so he doth. What then? What  
hath my bracelet  
To do with this?

HEROD.

Why, 'tis self-evident.  
Thou hast ne'er parted from it till to-  
day,—  
Not once since I first clasped it on thee.  
Well,  
Then, when I hear—dost mark me?—  
when I hear  
It has been found in Joseph's closet,—  
ay,  
When I hear where 'twas found, was it  
but natural  
That I should think—should find it  
strange—should wonder—  
Oh, thou must understand what I would  
say.  
It is all past: let us not think on it,—  
Let us not think.

MARIAMNE.

I will be queen to Death  
When I have ceased to think upon it.  
What!

Thou didst suspect me with thine uncle?  
Me?

Thy queen, thy wife, the mother of thy  
sons?

Thou hast suspected me, and with thine  
uncle?

—Now, God in heaven, commemorate  
this day

By pardoning Satan, for Thou mayest  
withal

Unjustly have condemned him!

HEROD.

Hear me, madam.

MARIAMNE.

Hear thee, to have mine ears more  
 blasted? Nay,  
 Let deafness rescue me from further  
 words  
 That thou mayst utter!

HEROD.

Madam.

MARIAMNE.

Out! Away!  
 I will not hear thee! False with Joseph?  
 False?—  
 False with his treasurer? Nay, God,  
 with any?  
 Why, I must laugh at this! The world  
 must laugh!  
 Oh, God! Oh, God! I am indeed un-  
 queened!  
 My heart and sceptre both at once are  
 broken!

HEROD.

Weep not.

MARIAMNE.

I do not weep! Tears, such as women  
 Do shed for lesser causes. I would  
 scorn  
 To offer this my sorrow. The red  
 drops  
 Shed from my riven heart, no man may  
 witness,  
 Though he were ten times tyrant, ten  
 times king,  
 Ten times a Herod!

HEROD.

Mariamne.

MARIAMNE.

Ay,  
 Murder my name, now thou hast slain  
 my honour!  
 Cry, "Mariamne," till the west doth  
 ring  
 An echo to the east, north unto south,  
 The earth to heaven, until the very stars  
 Cease in their song, to shriek, "Adul-  
 teress!"

HEROD.

Why, thou art mad!

MARIAMNE.

Oh, would to God I were!—  
 That this my reason had not joy sur-  
 vived,  
 To view my misery as a thing apart!  
 —O God! Shame is chief torturer in  
 hell:  
 Kill me outright, and be more merciful  
 Than hadst Thou spared more lives than  
 I have griefs!

HEROD.

Wilt thou not listen?

MARIAMNE.

Shall I tutor God?  
 Since He is deaf to me, I unto thee  
 Will be deaf also!

HEROD.

Mariamne, stay.

MARIAMNE.

She was the queen of Jewry, and was  
 slain  
 By one of Herod's words. I am the  
 queen  
 Of my sole self; therefore I will begone.

[Exit.]

HEROD.

How she defies me! Yet I swear I love  
 her  
 The more for her defiance. She were  
 one  
 To sit beside Jah on His throne and  
 nod  
 At quits with Juno. She hath scourged  
 me bravely,  
 Yet from each wound my heart's blood  
 leaped with love,  
 To kiss the hand that smote. And she  
 was proud,  
 Held herself loftily, and veiled her eyes  
 Beneath her haughty lids, as who should  
 say,

"Thine halves can view sufficiently this Herod."

Israel's God! her mind is virgin yet:  
I've never wedded save her body. She  
To word me thus,—she,—Mariamne,—  
she,—

The conquered daughter of a conquered  
king?

And yet I love her for 't. Yea, were  
I God,

And able to fill space with Mariamne,  
Compact the stars into her diadem,  
Darken heaven to give her light, and of  
eternity

Make one embrace, I were an-hungered  
still!

[Enter Servant.]

SERVANT.

A messenger, my lord, from Antony.

HEROD.

From Antony? Command him hither.

[Exit Servant.]

So!

Shall public warfare chafe the ill-shod  
heel

Of private strife? Can I not rest a  
moment?—

[Enter Messenger.]

Papers from Antony? What can they  
treat of?

[Opens them.]

What's this? What's this, I say?  
Knew'st thou of this?

Lysanius of Syria put to death!

Leagued with the Parthians! His rule  
given o'er—

Given to the Queen of Egypt,—Cleopa-  
tra!

Know you the contents of these papers,  
sir?

MESSANGER.

In part, my lord.

HEROD.

All this since I have left!  
And is Lysanius dead?

MESSANGER.

Even so, my liege.

HEROD.

Lysanius dead, and Cleopatra queen  
Of his domain? God! let me on—on—  
on!

What! More donations? The Naba-  
lacan kingdom,—

The sea-coast—what! Palestine's sea-  
coast—all—

From Eleutherus even unto Egypt,  
With only Tyre and Sidon, sir, ex-  
cepted?

This greedy wanton would storm heaven  
itself

Were Babel's tower standing! What!  
More yet?

Jericho, too?—Without, there, ho!

[Enter Attendant.]

Thou, sir,

Bid Sohemus and Saramallas hither—  
Stay, let them wait within my audience-  
chamber.

[Exit Attendant.]

While I fold these, sir, know'st thou if  
the queen

Went into Syria with Antony?

MESSANGER.

She did, my lord.

HEROD.

Ah! Say you? There's the germ  
Whence sprung this crooked tree o'  
knowledge. Come.  
Let's to my audience-chamber.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE II.

Enter ALEXANDRA and HYRCANUS.

ALEXANDRA.

But why not write to Malchus? Is not  
Malchus

Thy friend? Hath he not proved him-  
self thy friend?

Now, as Arabia's governor and lord,  
Is he not placed to take the part of  
friend

In verity towards us? Thou must know  
it!—

Ask that he send some horsemen to es-  
cort us

In safety from Jerusalem's boundaries.

What's in a letter? Thou couldst find  
some ten,

Ay, twelve, to bear 't in secret. There's  
Dositheus!

I'm sure Dositheus loves thee.

HYRCANUS.

So he doth;

Ay, so he doth,—he doth,—I'm sure he  
doth.

But as for writing unto Malchus,—  
why,

It is too much to ask of friendship.

ALEXANDRA.

What?

What is too much? That he do send us  
horsemen

To aid us in our flight? Call'st thou  
that much?

Why, 'twere an office he would claim  
with gladness.

As for the multitude, thou knowest well  
They are with thee,—not Herod.

HYRCANUS.

Daughter, daughter,

Why wilt thou not let peace sleep peace-  
fully?

Quiet doth seem to me a boon, good  
daughter,

That kings might place before their  
diadems.

I am too old to plan new orders.

ALEXANDRA.

So?

Then let me do 't. The future race of  
kings

That yet may spring to power from  
Mariamne

Will never find that fault, believe me,  
father,

Among the virtues of their sovereignty.  
Come, here is pen; come, here is parch-  
ment. Write,—

Write,—write.

HYRCANUS.

To Malchus? That he send us horse-  
men?

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, escort to the lake Asphaltites.

Write, sire, as thou wast king and wilt  
be! Write.

HYRCANUS.

Soft, daughter, soft! How would it be  
if Herod

Should by some means discover I had  
written?

Would it not anger him? Hast pon-  
dered that?

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, wilt thou pause to think of Herod's  
anger,

When thine should make thee pitiless?  
Plunge thy pen

Into my veins, that my resolvéd blood  
May of itself form the important words  
And save thy dubious hand the trouble!

HYRCANUS.

Nay,

Nay, nay; be not so violent, good  
daughter.

Canst thou not give me time to ponder  
this?

If Herod finds thou hadst a part in it,  
How then? How then?

ALEXANDRA.

Let then take care of then.

This now is in our charge. Oh, father,  
write.

Think on thy murdered grandson,—  
think on him.

The boy thou loved'st, so fair, so pure,  
so holy,

So all that Herod is not! Think on him,  
And on his fate, on what our fates may  
be,

And write to Malchus. See, here is the parchment  
Close to thy hand, and wax made ready.  
See—

I'll write it for thee,—That he'll send straightway

A troop of horsemen to escort us hence.  
That's all. Look! thou hast but to sign thy name

And seal it with thy seal: unto Dositheus

I will myself commit it privately.

As for Dositheus, thou knowest, father,  
He could not prove unfaithful. He knows well

What 'tis to lose kinspeople by this means,—

This Herod-plague. Ay, ay, Dositheus  
Will be as true to thee as thine own arm.

Fear not. Wilt thou not sign?

HYRCANUS.

How if I sign—  
My death-warrant?

ALEXANDRA.

Think not such woman thoughts:  
They do unsex thee. Naught can come of it  
But good to thee and thine.

HYRCANUS.

Sometimes death's good  
When life is evil.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, delay no longer!  
Sign, as thou lovest me,—as I love thee,—  
As God doth love us both! Sign,—  
sign, Hyrcanus.

HYRCANUS.

Thou'rt sure thou hast not asked but that?

ALEXANDRA.

But what?

HYRCANUS.

That he send horsemen to escort us?

ALEXANDRA.

Ay,  
As I'm thy daughter, that is all. Now sign.

Good father, sweet, sweet father, sign the letter.

Wilt thou not sign to please me, father?  
Look!

I have not had a pleasure since the day  
On which we lost our Aristobulus.  
It will so please me.

HYRCANUS.

Well—

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, do it! do it!  
Some one may come. There is no time.

HYRCANUS.

Thou'rt sure  
Thou'st only asked for escort?

ALEXANDRA.

Sure,—sure,—sure.  
Now sign it, father,—dearest father.

HYRCANUS.

Well,  
If thou art sure thou'st asked no more than that—

ALEXANDRA.

I swear it by my dead boy's murdered body!

HYRCANUS.

Soft! not so shrilly,—not so shrilly, daughter.

There [*signs letter*], will that pleasure thee?

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, God alone  
Doth know how much! Oh, dear my father, trust me,

When we are safe beyond these listening walls,

I'll tell thee how I thank thee! Some one comes,



*Enter MARIAMNE, slowly.*

Sweet father, say no word to her as yet:  
She must not know of this till by and  
by.

Why, gods! how pale she is!—Daughter,  
good-morrow.

What ails thee?

MARIAMNE.

Nothing. Mine own spirit. Ah!  
How farest thou, dear Hyrcanus?

HYRCANUS.

Why, my sweet one,  
As old men fare who have no occupation  
Save thinking on what occupied them  
once.

MARIAMNE.

'Tis a sad way to live.

HYRCANUS.

Think you?

MARIAMNE.

But to live any way is sad. Ay, sire;

ALEXANDRA.

How now?

What sour experience gave that max-  
im birth?

What hath gone wrong?

MARIAMNE.

My destiny.

ALEXANDRA.

Why, girl,  
I never saw thee in such plight before.

MARIAMNE.

Nor I myself.

HYRCANUS.

Dost thou feel ill, my star?—  
But then how rustily old wits do work!

Stars are exempt from maladies and ail-  
ments,

As thou shouldst be, my blossom.

MARIAMNE.

Thou'rt so good,  
So gentle ever, I do love thee. Here,  
Give me thy hand. Doth not my fore-  
head burn?

HYRCANUS.

Ay, ay, it doth.—What's well for fever,  
daughter?  
The child hath fever.

MARIAMNE.

There's no cure for this.

ALEXANDRA.

Now, by my faith, thou hast a fever,  
girl!

This comes o' too much roof-walking  
by night.

Thou knowest I warned thee not to stay  
so late.

But then I have a drink of balsam-  
flowers

That savors more of magic and strange  
arts

Than doth beseem a Jewish beverage.  
I'll give thee some to drink.

MARIAMNE.

'Twill do no good.

ALEXANDRA.

How dost thou say? I tell thee that it  
will.

Come, be not obstinate.

HYRCANUS.

Ay, go, my lamb,  
Go, take thy mother's brew. Go, pretty  
one:

She makes rare brews. There's one she  
hath of late,—

'Twill stop an aching back,—'tis wonder-  
ful.

MARIAMNE.

Hast one will stop an aching heart—for aye?

*Enter* JOSEPH.

JOSEPH.

[*To* HYRCANUS.]

My lord, the king would speak with thee.

HYRCANUS.

Well, Joseph—

Be docile, pretty one: thy mother's brews

Are brewed with strange discretion.  
Best you hearkened.

Wilt hearken, daughter?—Yes, I come,  
good Joseph.—

Fair health attend thee, fair one. Take  
the brew. [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH.

Sweet niece, how pale thou art!—How  
is't, in truth?

Is she ill, madam?

ALEXANDRA.

Why, I know not, sir.

Mayhap she'll not acknowledge it. She  
looks so.

MARIAMNE.

Nay, I am well enough, good uncle.—

Mother,  
Reach me my needlework.

ALEXANDRA.

What! wilt thou work?

Best that thou took'st the air awhile.

JOSEPH.

Ay, madam.

Wilt thou not walk?

MARIAMNE.

Good uncle, let me rest.

ALEXANDRA.

How? peevish?

MARIAMNE.

Possibly. Despair, good mother,  
Dons strange disguises. — Seemed I  
peevish, uncle?  
I'm sorry for it.

JOSEPH.

Tut! tut! tut! 'tis nothing.  
I mean, thou wert not peevish.

MARIAMNE.

Nay, I was.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, ay, thou wert indeed. What hath  
gone wrong?

Haply thy Herod hath his favors stinted,  
Doth not so hotly love thee?

JOSEPH.

Madam, madam,  
The king's love doth not wane with les-  
ser fires,  
But, like the sun, burns steadily, al-  
ways,  
Though sometimes by a cloud 'tis dark-  
ened.

ALEXANDRA.

Pshaw!  
It twinkles like a star; is no more fixed  
Than torch-reflections in a restless sea;  
Waneth and waxeth ever with the moon;  
Needeth, like any lamp, to be refilled  
With flattery's oil; flares with the wind  
b' passion,  
Like any earth-born flame.

JOSEPH.

Wilt thou, sweet niece,  
Hear this of thy fond lord, and yet be  
silent?

MARIAMNE.

Whom is he fond of?

JOSEPH.

Madam, canst thou ask it?

MARIAMNE.

Sir, canst thou answer it?

JOSEPH.

Ay, that can I.  
 With all my heart I'll speak in his  
 heart's cause.  
 If ever man loved woman, Jewry's king  
 Doth love the queen of Jewry.

ALEXANDRA.

Pah! go to!  
 Go to, I say! He'd love her ten times  
 better  
 Were she the queen of somewhere else.

JOSEPH.

Nay, lady,  
 Man were a god could he love more  
 than Herod.

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, ay, ay,—more than Herod loves him-  
 self.  
 I can believe thee.

JOSEPH.

[Turning to MARIAMNE.]

Madam, sure thou knowest  
 How dear thy husband holds thee.

MARIAMNE.

No, good uncle.

JOSEPH.

No! Ah, thou meanest thou wouldst  
 make me think  
 'Tis past thy comprehension.

ALEXANDRA.

Pshaw, I say!  
 He loves her by the moment, by the  
 mood,—  
 To fill the gap 'twixt war and war.

JOSEPH.

Why surely  
 Thou dost not think so, madam? As I  
 live,  
 There are ten thousand proofs he loves  
 his queen,—  
 Ay, more, that Herod doth love Mari-  
 amne  
 Till Antony and Cleopatra's loves  
 Seem like as sparks blown off from his  
 great fire.

ALEXANDRA.

Sparks that may scorch his robe of self-  
 esteem  
 Some windy day. What are ten thou-  
 sand proofs?  
 Give me but one, and all the doubtful  
 rest  
 Shall sleep beneath my blessing.  
 Where's a proof?  
 Come, proof, sir.

JOSEPH.

Proof? And is there need of proof?  
 Not that I have it not, but marvel,  
 madam,  
 That thou wouldst have it.—Lady, pray  
 thee listen.  
 Dost thou too wish a proof?

MARIAMNE.

If such there be,  
 I will not close mine ears against it.

JOSEPH.

How!  
 If such there be! If such there be!  
 Just heaven!  
 If there be proof that Herod loves thee?  
 Why,  
 I have one single one that would out-  
 size  
 Ten thousand thousand!

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, there's room for it.  
 Come, yield it,—yield, good Joseph.

JOSEPH.

Thou, my queen,  
 Wilt have me speak?

MARIAMNE.

Ay, if thou carest to.

JOSEPH.

Why, then,—but speak not of it to the king:

I know not if he'd like its mentioning,  
Though 'twere to prove his love,—ere  
he set forth

To Loadicea, he did instruct me, madam,—

Commission me—

ALEXANDRA.

Well, on: this wondrous proof,—  
I thirst to hear it.—Say you, daughter?

MARIAMNE.

Tell on, good uncle.

Ay,

JOSEPH.

He commissioned me,  
So dearly did he love thee, that should  
death

Be meted him by Antony—in fact,  
Should he be put to death—

MARIAMNE.

To death? What then?

JOSEPH.

So doth he worship thee, so doteth on  
thee,

That he commissioned me, in such event,  
In case, as I have said, that Antony—  
Who's there? Is't not one? Nay, I saw  
a figure.

Some one moved near the door, and,  
o' my word,

This must be kept with us.

MARIAMNE.

Well, on! on! on!  
What did he tell thee?

JOSEPH.

That if Antony  
Did order him to death,—did slay him,  
madam,—  
If Antony—

MARIAMNE.

If Antony did what?  
Good uncle, thou'st a Cleopatra tongue,  
That thus thou dinnest ever Antony  
In Mariamne's ears. They'd hear of  
Herod.

JOSEPH.

Well, then, in short, he did commission  
me,

If such were his sad fate to send thee  
after.

MARIAMNE.

How, sir? Not slay me?

JOSEPH.

Ay, that was his order.  
So dearly did he love thee (that in  
death—  
Even in death—he would not be with-  
out thee.

MARIAMNE.

Oh, mother, mother, take me to thy  
breast!  
I'm but thy child again,—no wife! no  
wife!  
No wife!

JOSEPH.

Why, lady!—

ALEXANDRA.

Dost thou mean to say  
That crownéd devil bade thee murder  
her?—  
My daughter?

JOSEPH.

Nay, not murder.

ALEXANDRA.

He hath murdered.  
Why not again? Blood-lust doth grow  
with tasting,  
And murders breed as summer locusts  
do.  
He hath her brother murdered, why not  
her?—

Why not the sister? Shall there be a  
limit  
Unto a Herod's thirst: when he cries  
out  
For blood to slake it, doth that being  
live  
Who'd dare deny him? Yea! For I  
am she,—  
I, Alexandra, rightful queen of Jewry!  
What! call you this a proof?—a proof  
of love?  
That she be murdered? Oh, how he  
doth love her!  
So that's thy proof? Oh, how he wor-  
ships her!  
It is thy proof, you say? Witness, O  
God,  
How he must dote upon her! Mari-  
amne,  
Up! up! Wilt thou bear this? Ah! she  
hath swooned.  
Some water, pray you. Toss me that  
cushion quickly.  
Here, place it here. Water, I pray you,  
sir. [Exit JOSEPH.]

O God of Gods, whose brow is bound  
with justice,  
Whose loins with vengeance,—Thou  
whose changeless shadow  
Breaks on the edge of Space, whose  
sheltering wings  
Enroof the windy temple of the stars,  
To whom the stars themselves are but  
as gold-dust  
From noiseless wheels of thy Triumphal  
Car,—  
Thou who of Thine Omnipotence madest  
man  
Visible in Thine image, and invisible  
Of Thine own essence,—let not his spilt  
blood  
Cry out to Thee in vain. Judge Thou,  
O Jah,  
The murderer of Aristobulus,  
Of him who as my son was dear indeed.  
But as thy high-priest precious beyond  
words!  
Judge Thou in all the would-be murderer  
Of this mine other child, the lawful  
daughter  
Of Alexander Thine anointed king!  
Judge him by his desires, not by his  
deeds,  
And Thou wilt have to make another hell  
To scorch another Satan!

## SCENE III.

*Another room in the palace.*

*Enter SALOME, laughing.*

SALOME.

Oh, fool, fool, fool! Oh, excellent,  
sweet fool!  
Sweet husband fool! Sweet, simple,  
foolish Joseph!  
How thou hast played into mine hands  
with this!  
To tell her that—ha! ha!—to tell her  
that,  
Of all things in the world, to prove his  
love!  
When thou art dead, mine own dear  
fool of fools,  
I will turn Roman and erect a temple  
Unto thy godlike memory! Oh, this—  
This is beyond my utmost expectation,—  
Mine enemy to toss into my lap  
The ball of fate,—my loyal husband—  
oh!  
I never loved him until now! ha! ha!  
What wisdom's in the fooling of some  
fools!  
Here comes my brother.—This will  
please you, brother,—  
Sweet brother, this will please you when  
you hear it.  
Wilt have the bracelet made to an ar-  
row-head  
To reach my heart, good brother? Nay,  
not yet,—  
Not yet, by that of Herod that's mine  
own!  
Farewell, sweet brother, till thou hear'st  
this news.  
Oh, Joseph, thou has made me bride  
again.  
I am again in love with thee for this!—  
Oh, darling fool! Ha! ha! ha! ha!

[Exit, laughing]

*Enter HEROD, folding some papers,  
followed by Attendant.*

Run after Saramallas with these papers,  
And bid the queen attend me.

[Exit Attendant.]

How accursed  
 These quarrels that divide us! I am  
 thirsty  
 Already for her lips. Her angry eyes  
 Yet paint the air with horror.—Death!  
 that look—  
 That look she gave me! Yet I did de-  
 serve it;  
 Ay, ay, 'twas well deserved. How her  
 lips curled,  
 Like threads that writhe in fire, and her  
 thin nostrils  
 Sucked like a veil blown o'er an open  
 mouth.  
 I swear, were she but angry with another,  
 I should more love her angry than com-  
 posed!  
 Ah, she is here. My blood leaps hard to  
 meet her.  
 Now, as I live, she shall be friends with  
 me,  
 Or I will make an enemy of God!

*Enter MARIAMNE.*

My queen!

MARIAMNE.

Not thine  
 In anything.

HEROD.

What, madam?

MARIAMNE.

Neither queen,  
 Nor wife, nor friend, nor slave, of thine.

HEROD.

What, madam?

MARIAMNE.

My name is Mariamne. I am sister  
 To Aristobulus,—that Aristobulus  
 Who died conveniently.

HEROD.

Why, what is this?

MARIAMNE.

The truth in person.

HEROD.

Mariamne, thou—  
 Even thou mayst go too far.

MARIAMNE.

How? To my grave?

HEROD.

Hast thou gone mad?

MARIAMNE.

If to face fate be madness.

HEROD.

Is this some trick,—some fantasy?

MARIAMNE.

Why, no.  
 It is my freedom's birthday.

HEROD.

How? Thy freedom?

MARIAMNE.

Have I not said? I am mine own and  
 God's:  
 None other owns so much as the sixth  
 share  
 In my least drop of blood.

HEROD.

Dost thou defy me?

MARIAMNE.

No, Herod; I despise thee.

HEROD.

What?

MARIAMNE.

Despise

And scorn thee.

HEROD.

Thou art mad,—I'm sure of it;  
 Ay, thou art mad,—mad,—mad!



MARIAMNE.

If it be madness  
To scorn thee, I am mad.

HEROD.

To scorn me? Thou?  
To scorn me? Thou, whom I have  
loved!—  
God! loved!

MARIAMNE.

Loved? Loved? Blaspheme not Love's  
most holy name,  
Lest he do blast thee. What, thou  
love? What! thou?—  
Herod, and say thou'st loved? Oh,  
love most mighty,  
Most infinite, most tender, to contem-  
plate  
The murder of the thing it loved!

HEROD.

The murder?  
Wert thou not mad—

MARIAMNE.

The murder,—ay, the murder.  
What! thou canst stand and bare thine  
eyes to mine,  
And speak of love? Oh, wise to make  
my butcher  
Him whom thou didst suspect me with,  
—ay, Herod,  
The man whom thou didst think my  
paramour!

HEROD.

What dost thou mean?

MARIAMNE.

That thou didst love me well  
Most well and nobly, when thou or-  
dered'st Joseph,  
If thou wert slain by Marc Antonius,  
To slay me also, whom thou dost so  
love!

HEROD.

Who told thee this? Who told thee this,  
I say?

MARIAMNE.

Joseph himself.

HEROD.

Adulteress!

MARIAMNE.

Sir—

HEROD.

Ay,  
Adulteress! Now know I thou art false.  
What! dost thou think a man would  
give such words  
Unto a woman lest there were between  
them  
A tie more strong than death?—would  
thus brave death,  
Nay, woo death as a bride? Cursed be  
ye both!  
Thou, woman, thou, whom I have called  
my wife,  
May there be drought throughout thy  
treacherous veins  
As in a land accursed! Ay, mayst thou  
shrivel  
To a lank, eye-blasting horror day by  
day,  
Until a million million lagging years  
Have sucked thy blood, as babes once  
sucked thy breast  
When thou wast Herod's wife!

MARIAMNE.

Thy coward curse  
I do shake off as 'twere a stained gar-  
ment.  
God is with me. Thou, Herod, stand'st  
alone.  
Thou hast scared even pity from thy  
side  
With those foul words. There is my  
crown,—there all  
Of Mariamne that remains to thee!

[Flings her crown at his feet, and Exit.]

HEROD.

Oh, God! I choke! Wine, there! Nay,  
blood,—blood,—blood!

[Exit.]

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*A room in HEROD's palace.*

*Enter HEROD, laughing.*

HEROD.

Am I called Herod, and shall Fate  
laugh at me?

No, I will laugh at Fate!—

Ha! ha! ha! ha! Oh, I have been well  
fooled,—

Herod the Fool, not Herod King of  
Jewry.

Who was the man in Egypt had a  
treasurer

Called Joseph? But that Joseph was not  
false.

Potiphar's Joseph unto Herod's Joseph  
Was as the smile of God unto His frown.  
God's frown? Ay, God can frown; but  
so can Herod.

And Herod's wife to Potiphar's? Ay,  
there—

There is the matter: my wife unto Poti-  
phar's

Is as one drop of mud unto another!

Oh, curse her! curse her! What! false  
unto me?—

My queen, and with my treasurer? Both  
false?

Not even the cutting comfort of his  
truth

To hug? Adulteress! adulteress!

Now let such angels as cry "Holy!"  
thrice

Before the throne of God, so shriek  
that word

"Adulteress" that she may hear it ring  
From heaven to hell, when she doth  
stand in pride

Before the throne of Satan! May she  
live

To die ten times a pulse-beat! May  
starved fiends,

With faces like her children's, gnaw her  
heart

And spit it in her eyes to dry her tears!  
May she be Baal's drudge, and bear  
him devils

To rend her paramour! God! God!  
God! God!

That I were but Thyself, to revise hell  
And multiply capacity for pain  
By all the words in space!

*Enter SOHEMUS.*

SOHEMUS.

I am here, my liege.

HEROD.

Go bid my mother and Salome hither.  
Ay, let her come.

[*Exit SOHEMUS.*]

'Tis well that she should come.  
She shall this dainty pleasure share with  
me.

For every pang of anguish I endure,  
She shall be torn with two,—ay, with  
a hundred.

Oh, devil, devil, to have told me of it!  
And yet I'd know. But 'twas a devil's  
errand.

[*Enter SALOME and CYPROS.*]

So, madam, thou hast come,—and thou?  
Ye're welcome.

The day is fair.

SALOME.

What mean'st thou?

HEROD.

What meant'st thou?

SALOME.

When?

HEROD.

When thou brought'st me that bracelet?

SALOME.

Why,  
My meaning was as easily observed  
As was the bracelet.

HEROD.

[*Seizing her by the throat.*]

Darest thou, jade? So! so!

CYPROS.

Herod, hold off thy hands! Thou'lt  
choke her!

HEROD.

By God's help or the devil's, so I will. <sup>Ay,</sup>

CYPROS.

Thou'rt mad!—Help, ho! The king is mad!

HEROD.

'Tis madness  
To say a king is mad. Well, there she  
is:  
Mayst thou rejoice in her!

CYPROS.

Thou hast half killed her.

HEROD.

Would it were wholly! Serpents die  
not thus.

CYPROS.

Thou art a fiend!

HEROD.

Else were I not her brother.  
Look thou,—thou, madam, who art lying  
there,—

Die not ere thy reward be given thee.  
I took thee for a liar, but in all  
Thou hast been true,—I do acknowledge  
it,—

In all,—in all. I've somewhat roughly  
used thee,  
But thou shalt have amends,—ay, ay,  
amends.

What thinkest thou 'twill be? Thou  
canst not dream,

Canst thou, poor dove? thou art so sad-  
ly ruffled

Since thou didst choose to preen thy  
dainty feathers

Betwixt a tiger's paws,—poor dove, poor  
dove!

But there shall be reward.

CYPROS.

Speak what thou meanest.  
Canst thou not see she is half dead—  
poor girl!—  
With thy rough usage?

HEROD.

She shall have a toy  
To soothe her waking,—ay, a pretty ball  
To toss withal, of red and white and  
black.

Like you the colors?

SALOME.

Dost thou mean in truth  
Thou hast aught for me?

HEROD.

Ay.

SALOME.

What is it?

HEROD.

Why,  
Thy husband's head!—Without, there,  
ho! *[Enter Attendant.]*

Send Sohemus  
Straightway unto me.—What! dost pale?

What! thou,  
A Joseph's wife, and pale? Thou! thou!  
Oh, thou  
Shalt feel what 'tis to suffer.—

*[Enter SOHEMUS.]*

Sohemus,  
Take forth this woman's husband, the  
Idumean  
Joseph, sometime my trusted treasurer,  
And let him not return.

SALOME.

How! Banish him?

HEROD.

No.

SALOME.

What then?

HEROD.

Slay him.

SALOME.

Never! thou wouldst not.

HEROD.

Soft! shall I break a promise? 'Twas  
my word.

Thou shalt be paid in full,—in full,—in  
full.

By God! I am half minded that thy lap  
Should serve as block for his beheading!

—Sir,

Away unto thy office!—Ay, there,  
crouch,—

Crouch, thou foul, damnéd thing. What!  
still so white,

For all thy well-daubed red? Ere it be  
night

Thou shalt have blood for paint!

CYPROS.

My son!—my son!

HEROD.

No son of thine, to call that monster  
sister.

—Let me not thrice remind thee,  
Sohemus:

To work without delay. To work!

SOHEMUS.

But, sire—

HEROD.

Tempt me not thrice, I say. Begone!

[SOHEMUS attempts to go, but SALOME  
clings to him and prevents him from  
leaving.]

SALOME.

By God,

He shall not till I know what thou dost  
purpose.

HEROD.

Why, then remain, good Sohemus; re-  
main.

'Twill give me joy such as kings seldom  
know

To tell her what I purpose. It is this.  
With the first western streak of evening  
red,

It is my purpose—wilt thou write it  
down?

Here are my tablets, if thou hast none.  
No?

So be it. As I said, with the first stain  
Of blood from Night's wound on the  
brow of Day

The blood of thy sweet spouse shall  
stain likewise

The sword of him I shall appoint here-  
with

To strike his fair head from his comely  
neck.

'Tis now some minutes short of sunset-  
ting.

Let Sohemus place a chair beside this  
window

Ere he goes forth. Methinks it is but  
just

That after all thy crafty painstaking  
Thou shouldst enjoy results unto the full.

The execution will take place there,—  
seest thou?—

Beneath that date-tree.—Sohemus, a  
chair.

SALOME.

Thou wouldst not do it!

HEROD.

No, I'll have it done.

From childhood I've abhorred the sight  
of blood,

Save when it's battle-shed: it turns me  
faint.

Wilt thou not have the chair?

SALOME.

Thou couldst not kill him.

HEROD.

What didst thou think that I would do,  
sweet sister,

When thou hadst proved him false?  
Have him to sup?

A higher honor waits him, trust me,  
madam:

He shall be Herod's chief ambassador  
To Satan, and his power unlimited.

There are some things in hell that I'd  
have changed,—

Ay, some in heaven. Thou'rt pale. Nay,  
have the chair.

SALOME.

If thou wouldst kill him, let her die  
with him.

HEROD.

Make her ambassadress who was a  
queen?  
It were not seemly.

SALOME.

'Tis the law of Jewry  
That both should die.

HEROD.

Herod is Herod's law.

SALOME.

Brother, I lied! In all I lied! In  
everything  
I was a liar!

HEROD.

Ay, and thou dost lie,  
In all thou liest, and in everything  
Thou art a liar, still!—

SALOME.

Good brother, hear me—

HEROD.

A Herod hear a liar?

SALOME.

'Twas her fault,—  
Not his, but hers.

HEROD.

Devil! I'd shed his blood  
To wipe those words out, if for noth-  
ing else!  
What! thou art not yet satisfied? God's  
wrath!  
I'll make thee drain a goblet of his  
blood  
Unto my health! Away! The west is  
red;  
The headsman's sword is thirsty.

SALOME.

Herod—

HEROD.

Nay,  
Remind me not that I am Herod, woman,  
If thou wouldst gain thy plea.

SALOME.

Brother—

HEROD.

That's worse.

SALOME.

As Jewry's king I kneel to thee.

HEROD.

As wife  
To an adulterous hound I spurn thee.

SALOME.

[To CYPROS.]

Madam,  
Help me to plead.

CYPROS.

Wilt thou not hear me, sir?

HEROD.

No! for thou art her mother.—Sohemus,  
Forth on my errand.

SALOME.

[Clinging to SOHEMUS.]

Nay, he shall not.

CYPROS.

Sir,  
Think what thou doest.

SOHEMUS.

Ay, in God's name, sire—

HEROD.

In mine own name I do command thee  
forth.—

Unhand him, madam. Thou weak,  
 snivelling wretch,  
 Unloose him, or I will compel thee,—  
 thus.—

[*Dragging SALOME away from*  
 SOHEMUS.]

Sohemus, forth upon my errand. Lo!  
 The west is yet more red! Ha! ha! ha!  
 ha!

## SCENE II.

*Enter MARIAMNE.*

MARIAMNE.

Oh, God! that I were dead!—that I were  
 dead!—

That I were dead!—or that I had not  
 lived

To be the sepulchre of mine own heart!  
 What! Mariamne called adulteress  
 By Herod? Herod call me that? Just  
 heaven!

All things are possible after this thing!  
 Oh, that foul name! Would he had  
 sent his sword

To find the utmost secret of my heart,  
 Or ever my quick ears had sucked that  
 poison!

Where shall I turn for comfort?—Is to  
 live

Always to wish for death? Now, were  
 it so,

And my veins nourishing an unborn  
 child,

I'd spill their plenty unto lapping dogs  
 Ere breath should be its portion! Let  
 me think,—

Ay, let me think. He shed my brother's  
 blood.

And my blood feeds the hearts of his two  
 sons.

What horror were beyond this horrible?  
 Ay, there is one. He hath been loved  
 by me!

I've held his murderous hands, played  
 with the curls

That warmed his murder-pregnant brain,  
 —ay, kissed—

Oft kissed the lips that spoke the mur-  
 dering words,

Lain down my head above the awful  
 secret

His heart so well did keep! Oh, God!  
 oh, God!

Must I know this and live? Sweet  
 heaven, but rid me

Of this disgraced body, and my soul  
 Upon the wind of knowledge may be  
 blown

Eternally an alien and accursed,  
 Yet I will think Thee merciful.

*Enter ALEXANDER with pomegranate-  
 flowers.*

ALEXANDER.

Look, mother,  
 Sweet, mother. look! Here are pome-  
 granate-flowers,

To make thee think thou'rt in Samaria.  
 Are those more beautiful? Look, moth-  
 er!

MARIAMNE.

Nay,  
 Nay, do not touch me! do not speak to  
 me!

Oh, look not so, my heart,—my life,—  
 my son,—

Mine, and not his! Come, touch me!  
 touch me! touch me!

Speak to me! kiss me! clasp me! let  
 me hear

Ten thousand words of love!

ALEXANDER.

Why dost thou hold me?  
 Thou'lt crush the flowers. And pray  
 thee tell me, mother,

Why wast not pleased at first? Have I  
 been naughty?

I thought thou'dst like the flowers so  
 much.

MARIAMNE.

I do,—  
 I do. The pretty flowers,—ay, they are  
 lovely,

And colored like to blood,—like unto  
 blood.

ALEXANDER.

Why dost thou say it so? The ugly  
 word!

I hate that word,—that "blood." Wilt  
 thou not wear them?



MARIAMNE.

Ay, ay,—upon my heart,—there is the place.  
Look not at me out of his eyes. Dost hear?  
Thou hast his eyes, I say! Do not look at me!

ALEXANDER.

Mother!

MARIAMNE.

No, not that word! Dost hear me, boy?  
Why, they're his very eyelids! Get thee gone!  
Away with thee! Oh, God! Come back! come back!  
I did not mean it. Look at me, nor weep!  
I did not mean it. Look, I'll drink thy tears  
With kisses. Would that they were poisonous!  
Is this the dagger that I gave thee?  
Come,—  
Give it to me again, and here—

[Uncovering her neck.]

ALEXANDER.

Nay, mother,  
What dost thou mean? Take care! It is so sharp;  
I sharpened it to-day.

MARIAMNE.

To-day is well;  
To-day should every sword throughout Judea  
Be newly whetted, and their edges proved  
Upon one heart!

ALEXANDER.

At what dost look so hard?

MARIAMNE.

Upon that glare of steel. Stand not like that,—  
'Tis so he stands a hundred times a day.

Move,—walk,—change that position,—anything,  
So thou dost not look like him. Yes,—thy flowers,—  
Thy flowers. When hast thou seen thy father? Nay,  
I mean thou must not name him unto me  
So long as thou dost live. Dost understand?

ALEXANDER.

I must not name my father to thee?

MARIAMNE.

Ay,

Thou must not.

ALEXANDER.

Why? Dost thou not like his name?  
I will not say his name.

MARIAMNE.

Thou'lt not speak of him  
In any wise. Dost hear?

ALEXANDER.

Ay, mother, but—

MARIAMNE.

Where didst thou get these flowers?  
They are so fresh.  
Didst thou think of it all of thine own self?  
There is one pity: they have not a perfume.  
Perfume's the soul of flowers. I think such flowers  
As have no perfume will not bloom in heaven,  
But perish, with the beasts. Thou hast not seen him,—  
Thy father,—then, to-day? Nay, speak not! Look,  
Here is the way the fruit begins to grow.  
Did he speak to thee? Nay, no word,—no word.  
There, go! go! go! Bring me some flowers, my heart,  
That have sweet perfumes. Run! run! run!

[Exit ALEXANDER.]

## SCENE III.

*Enter HEROD and DOSITHEUS.*

HEROD.

A letter from Hyrcanus unto Malchus?  
Malchus? What should Hyrcanus with  
this Malchus?

DOSITHEUS.

My liege, I'd have thee read. My tongue  
rebels:  
'Twill not be proxy for disloyal words.

HEROD.

Disloyal?

DOSITHEUS.

When thou'st read the letter, sire,  
I think thou wilt agree with me.

HEROD.

Disloyal?

He gave it to thee?

DOSITHEUS.

He and Alexandra.

HEROD.

Ah! Alexandra! Well, I'll read it. So!  
An escort to Arabia! That's well,—  
Excellent. Ay, I'm very glad to know  
He's in such gallant health. An escort,  
sir,

Unto Arabia! He's somewhat aged—  
Think you?—to look on travelling as a  
pleasure.

I'm glad his health's so good.

DOSITHEUS.

Was I right, sire,  
To bring the letter to thee?

HEROD.

Right,—most right.  
'Tis at all times a cheering thing, Do-  
sitheus,

To know thy wife's grandfather is in  
health.

It cheers me, sir,—it cheers me, verily.  
I thought he coughed of late.

DOSITHEUS.

And so he doth.

HEROD.

No matter: he'd ride double with his  
cough  
Into Arabia. It cannot, sir,  
Be very heavy. Come, re-seal this letter.

DOSITHEUS.

Seal it?

HEROD.

Ay, seal it. And when it is sealed,  
Bear it, as thou wast told to do, to  
Malchus.

DOSITHEUS.

My liege?

HEROD.

Sir, I have said.

DOSITHEUS.

That I this letter  
Bear to Arabia's governor?

HEROD.

Ay.

DOSITHEUS.

Sire,  
Thou canst not understand its full im-  
port.

HEROD.

Possibly.

DOSITHEUS.

But, my lord, take it to Malchus?  
How if he answers it?

HEROD.

Dositheus,  
It is not how if he will answer it,

But, if he answers, how it will be answered.

DOSITHEUS.

I think I comprehend thy meaning, sire.

HEROD.

Think not, but act. Take thou the fleetest horse

From out my stables, and to Malchus,—ho!

To Malchus ere 'tis night! Dositheus, Be prompt, and thou shalt win a higher place

Than even now thou hast in mine esteem.

Away to Malchus.

DOSITHEUS.

I will ride, my lord,  
As lover to his maid. Trust me in all.  
[Exit.]

HEROD.

[Looking after him.]

In all but all. This works to thine advantage:

Therefore I trust thee. Were Hyrcanus king,

Thou shouldst not be the letter-carrier  
Of Herod, good Dositheus,—no, no,  
I promise thee! God! how my head  
burns! Oh!

It is as though my skull were but a crucible

For flames to dance in. Ha! ha! ha!  
That's famous!

A crownéd crucible! I've not the knack  
Of fitting big ideas to little words:

I'm Herod,—more a poem than a poet.  
Poets are mad, they say,—leastwise in Persia;

Well, I'm in Jewry, and I'm not a poet,  
Ergo, not mad; yet I've sometimes be-  
thought me,

If the worst madness were not sanity,  
To be most mad 's to think thyself most sane.

But if thou'rt sane and think'st thou  
mayest be mad?

How then? Were it not better many  
times

To be unknowing mad?—honestly raving?

'Tis not a pleasant task at hush of night

To daub upon the canvas of the future  
Such scenes as thou mayst choose to  
conjure up

Where thou shalt have declared a war  
'gainst Reason.

'Tis better to dream sleeping than awake.  
Traitors go mad sometimes, so I have  
heard,

For thinking on their sins; beggars, they  
say,

Are sometimes starved to madness; fel-  
lows, too,

Rave in the galleys. I do ofttimes wonder

If madness ever seized a king? Ay, ay,  
Nebuchadnezzar grazed; but Balaam's  
ass

Forsook his asshood and adopted speech:  
It is a serious question which was mad-  
der,—

The man who took the ass's method, or  
The ass who took the method of the man.

I'll have my chief interpreter take notes  
Upon that theme,—if Balaam's ass was

mad.

On his decision hangs a serious question:  
Nebuchadnezzar's sanity.—What's that?

[A scream without.]

What's that, I say?

Enter ALEXANDER, running, pale as death.

ALEXANDER.

Oh, father, father, father!

HEROD.

What is it? Speak, I say! Where is  
thy tongue?

Speak o' the instant! Is thy mother—  
Ha!

What o' thy mother?

ALEXANDER.

Mother doth not know.

Oh, come with me,—quick,—quick!

HEROD.

What is it, sir?  
God! I will know.

ALEXANDER.

Oh, sir,—I know it's false,—  
But they have bound my uncle Joseph.  
Oh!  
The cords have cut him so! They say,  
moreo'er,  
'Tis thy command, and that he must be  
killed,—  
His head chopped off. Oh, father, come!  
—don't wait!  
I know thou'lt come. He kissed me;  
and he wept;  
He said thou hadst his blessing; and the  
blood  
Was all upon his wrists, and on his robe,  
And they are cutting off his beard and  
hair.  
Oh, come! come! come!

HEROD.

Well, boy, why should I come?

ALEXANDER.

Oh, father, please be different; mock me  
not,—  
Mock me not now: afterwards thou  
mayst tease me  
Until my heart is like to burst, but now—  
Oh, quickly, father, quickly give me leave  
To have chopped off the heads of those  
who seized him.  
Oh, 'twas so pitiful!  
He'd just begun to show me how a  
storm—  
A sand-storm in the desert—smothered  
men  
And camels. Come! come! come!  
The cord has cut so deep into his wrists!  
Come, father!

HEROD.

How if I told thee I had ordered this?

ALEXANDER.

Oh, do not mock! 'Twill be too late!  
Oh, come!

HEROD.

Thy uncle Joseph dies at my command.

ALEXANDER.

Oh, no! no! no!

HEROD.

I say he doth.

ALEXANDER.

And I,  
That thou art mad to say it.

HEROD.

Mad!

ALEXANDER.

Ay, mad!  
Oh, father, come! I kneel.

HEROD.

It is too late.

ALEXANDER.

No! no! not if thou'lt hurry.

HEROD.

I do tell thee  
It is too late.

[Turns to window.]

Ha! there he is.—Good uncle,  
Good-even to thee. Bear King Lucifer  
Word of my everlasting fealty. So!  
Up in my arms, boy. Look!

ALEXANDER. [Shrieks.]

Oh, uncle! uncle!  
Speak to him, father! Oh! the sword!  
the sword!  
Make him put up his sword.—We're  
coming, uncle!  
Uncle, we're coming.—Oh, why doth he  
kneel?  
Why doth he bend his neck? Oh, God!  
oh, God!  
The blood! the blood! the blood!

[Turns suddenly with a wild gesture.]

Thou'rt not my father!—  
Thou art a devil. Devils wear not  
crowns.  
There, devil!

[*Snatches off his father's crown and  
flings it out of the window, then  
swoons.*]

HEROD.

[*Dashing him down.*]

Not thy father? I believe thee.

# ACT V.

## SCENE I.

*A room in HEROD's palace.*

*Enter SALOME and Cup-Bearer.*

SALOME.

The king returns to-day.

CUP-BEARER.

Ay, madam.

SALOME.

Art sure thou knowest thy part? Well,

CUP-BEARER.

Hear me, and see.

SALOME.

Be quick, then. Soft! I'll draw this  
curtain first.  
Now, quickly.

CUP-BEARER.

First, then, madam, I'm to wait  
Till thou send'st for me; then, on some  
occasion  
When the king hath had words more  
violent  
Than usual with the queen, I enter in,  
Hastily, yet with a composéd mien,  
That I may seem assured in every way

As to the service I'm about to render.  
Next I do tell the king Queen Mariamne  
Hath coaxed me to assist her in the  
mixture

Of a love-potion, all of whose ingredients  
I do not know; that this was kept a  
secret

From all but us who brewed it; that I  
thought

My safest course, both for myself and  
him,

Was to confess it all. Is not that right?

SALOME.

Ay, ay. But shouldst thou falter—

CUP-BEARER.

I'll not falter,  
Trust me, good madam, I have not for-  
gotten

The day she had me scourged for mak-  
ing free

To pinch the ears of Aristobulus  
For sprinkling me with water. I'll not  
shrink.

Her servants' whips have sealed me to  
thy service.

SALOME.

Well, go thy ways till I have need of  
thee.

Go with a usual face: purse not thy  
brows,

Nor look as though thy heart hung on  
thy ribs

A bag o' secrets. Go: some one is com-  
ing.

Think of the gold that shall be thine.  
That's well.

Now go.—Ha! it is she herself. Go  
quickly!

[*Exit Cup-Bearer.*]

*Enter MARIAMNE.*

Good-morrow, murderess.

MARIAMNE.

Wouldst thou, poor wretch,  
Raise anger from the dead? Thy woes,  
Salome,  
Make me forbearing.

SALOME.

So they make not me,  
Proud-nostrilled harlot!

MARIAMNE.

Darest thou?

SALOME.

Dare I? God,  
Help me to laugh! Ha! ha! ha! ha!  
Dare I?

MARIAMNE.

Nay, I forgot.—thou'rt mad. Poor,  
fond, weak wretch,  
In seeking my destruction thou hast com-  
passed  
Thy husband's death.

SALOME.

Wilt thou remind me of it?  
Take that! [*Stabs at her.*]

MARIAMNE.

[*Quietly, holding her by both wrists.*]

Yes, I will take it, verily,  
But not as thou didst mean that I should  
take it.

I am as far thy better in my body  
As in my soul. There! get thee gone!—  
away!—

Ere I am tempted unto what I would  
not.

I'll keep thy dagger as a dear memento  
Of this most gentle scene; and should  
my heart

Grow soft in thinking of thy grief, my  
soul

Shall profit by the lesson of this steel.  
Go, woman.

SALOME.

Ay, I go,—to come again.  
[*Exit.*]

MARIAMNE.

Murderess? Yea, I feel a murderess.  
Ah, Joseph, had I known,—had I but  
known,—

Torture could not have wrung those  
words from me,  
For I'd have wedded dumbness on the  
rack.

O God, O God, is this Thy king?—this  
Herod?—

This Mariamne's husband?—this rage-  
buffeted

And passion-driven slayer of the in-  
nocent?—

This king whose humors rule him?—this  
fond fool

Who wears distemper's motley, and  
whose crown

Is but a badge of sin? Rather hath not  
Some devil dispossessed his soul, to  
reign

Over his body's kingdom?

Oh, this is not the man whose bride I  
was,

The king whose queen, the conqueror  
whose wife!

Ah me! we women, how have we vexed  
Love,

That he doth scourge us speak we but  
his name?

I will be gentle with her, for the sake  
Of him who was her husband; but this  
dagger

Shall keep me ever cautious.

*Enter HEROD.*

HEROD.

What say you?

MARIAMNE.

I spoke, sir, with a ghost.

HEROD.

Ha?

MARIAMNE.

With a ghost  
Which was thy handicraft.

HEROD.

Woman!

MARIAMNE.

A ghost  
That wore a scarlet collar,—one whose  
head  
Was plastered on with blood.



HEROD.

Away, thou fiend!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, send me not away: I should much  
please thee.

There is the making of a pretty ghost  
In me, my lord, and scarlet is my color.

HEROD.

Devil!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, wife to one.

HEROD.

*[Drawing a dagger.]*

Begone, I say!

MARIAMNE.

Ay, strike! Thou hast a genius, sir, be-  
lieve me,

For ghost-making. Strike! there is noth-  
ing—ay,

Nothing in all the world would so en-  
chant me

As being made a ghost to haunt thee!  
Nay,

Glare not as I already were a ghost.

I see thou art not in a loving mood:

Therefore I will begone. Great king of  
ghosts,

Good-morrow.

[Exit]

HEROD.

I said that I'd have blood,—I said so,—  
ay,

But there is not enough in all the land  
To slake my humor's thirst. Oh that I  
were

Another Pharaoh, and another Moses

Would turn the Nile to blood a second  
time,

That I might swim through its encrim-  
soned waves!

Oh that I were a thing of quenchless  
thirst,

A vampire monstrous, flattened at the  
throat

Of one vast body which should be the  
flesh

Incorporate of every thing alive!

*Enter DOSITHEUS.*

Dositheus,

Is't thou?

DOSITHEUS.

My liege, the letter.

HEROD.

How? From Malchus?

• DOSITHEUS.

From Malchus, sire.

HEROD.

That's well; that's well. Ah ha!  
Look here, Dositheus: what think you,  
man,

Of that,—and that,—and that?

He will not only send an escort, sir.  
To his beloved Hyrcanus,—dost thou  
mark?—

But will make welcome all whom he may  
bring,

Even all the Jews that may be of his  
party,

And he shall lack for nothing. God of  
Israel!

There's one thing that he shall not lack  
for,—death!

DOSITHEUS.

My liege—

HEROD.

So the good Malchus doth agree?

DOSITHEUS.

My liege—

HEROD.

I'll show this letter to the Sanhedrim,  
And he shall straightway suffer to the  
utmost

The law that deals with traitors!

DOSITHEUS.

But, my liege—

HEROD.

Away! Send me Hyrcanus and his daughter.  
Bid them at once attend me.

[Exit DOSITHEUS.]

Would to heaven  
His withered veins held more of that red fluid  
Which can alone quench my insatiate thirst!  
Such drops as death may wring from his dry body  
Will but make wet the door-way of a throat  
That gapes for rivers.

*Enter HYRCANUS and ALEXANDRA.*

Thou art come, my lord.  
I'm glad to see that thou'rt not more infirm.  
I pray thee, sit. —Sit, madam.

ALEXANDRA.

No, I'll stand.  
I can breathe better standing. What is it?

HEROD.

Why, sure thou wouldst not hear before thy father,—  
Thou who art courteous to thy waiting-woman  
And cry thy needle pardon if thou breakest it?—  
Thou'lt sit, sir?

HYRCANUS.

Yes, I thank thy courtesy,  
I'm better friends with bed each day I live.

HEROD.

Yet thou'rt industrious for an old man, sir.

HYRCANUS.

Industrious?

HEROD.

Ay; thou doest many things  
Which young men could not better.

HYRCANUS.

I, my son?

ALEXANDRA.

What dost thou mean?

HEROD.

Softly, good mother-in-law:  
I speak unto thy father.—Good Hyrcanus.  
Thou hast a talent that I dreamed not of.

HYRCANUS.

Thou flatterest me, sir. I won a crown  
From the Athenian senate once; but, truth,  
'Twas long ago.

HEROD.

The thing of which I speak  
Might, sir, have won thee back the crown of Jewry,  
Had it succeeded.

ALEXANDRA.

What?

HEROD.

I speak, my friend,  
Of this thy unsuspected talent—

ALEXANDRA.

Well?

HEROD.

Of letter-writing.

[Shows him the letter.]

I assure thee, sir,  
I could not trace—upon my honor, sir—  
Characters clearer or more shapely.

HYRCANUS.

Daughter,  
It is some jest, is't not? Pray you, in-  
form me:  
I never had the trick o' jest-catching.

ALEXANDRA.

Father, come with me. Ay, it is a jest,—  
It is a jest. Come, father; come, Hyrcanus.

HEROD.

Stay, both of ye! Stir not a step!—A  
jest?  
A jest to make hell merry!  
What! wouldst feign ignorance, thou  
damned traitress?—  
Thou, sir, dost thou in truth dare to pre-  
tend  
'Thou dost not recognize this letter?—  
this,—  
The one thou sent'st unto Arabia's  
governor,—  
To Malchus? Ha! I touch thee! Good  
my lord,  
This Malchus is an honest friend o' thine.  
Look! he will send thee escort. Look!  
thy party,  
Even such Jews as thou mayest take with  
thee,  
Will be provided for. Look here,—and  
here!  
Thou shalt not want for aught. Oh,  
would to heaven  
That I had such a friend!—that this same  
Malchus  
Were Herod's friend!

[ALEXANDRA *sinks half fainting into a  
chair.*]

What, madam, wilt thou sit,  
Now that thy father stands? It is not  
seemly.  
Up on thy feet: thou canst breathe bet-  
ter so. [Laughing.]  
Methinks thou shouldst thank God with  
all thy breath  
That thou dost breathe at all!

ALEXANDRA.

It was my fault:  
Lay all the blame on me,—on me.

HEROD.

Attend.

This is thy father's signature, is't not?

ALEXANDRA.

I teased him to it. Oh, if any suffers,  
It should be I!

HYRCANUS.

Nay, nay, thou must not suffer:  
It was my fault to let thee bring me to  
it.  
I am old, Herod, but not yet so old  
As to have outlived courage. Weep not,  
daughter;  
I'll bear the fullest consequence:—weep  
not:  
Would I could weep!

HEROD.

Thou shalt, and tears of blood.—  
Without, there, ho!

*Enter Attendants.*

Lead forth this man straightway  
Unto the palace prison, and send  
Sohemus  
Unto me in my closet.

ALEXANDRA.

Thinkest thou, Herod,  
While Alexandra still is Alexandra,  
Her father shall be fingered by a slave?—  
Thou knave, thou durst not touch him.—  
Father, come;  
Come with me,—so.—Thou, sirrah, lead  
the way.—  
Good father, lean on me.

HYRCANUS.

I'm very old;  
Death hath been close to me for many  
years.  
I am not frightened. Hath he naught  
to say?—  
Naught of his reasons?

ALEXANDRA.

He hath none to speak of.  
Come, come, come, come.

HYRCANUS.

Well, I am old, and death is like a friend  
Who comes disguised as an enemy.

Think'st thou he'll let me speak to  
Mariamne

And to her pretty boys?

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, ay. Come on.

HYRCANUS.

Her boys are like her, but one hath his  
eyes.

Well, well, I've lived to be so old that  
death—

Even death will not seem new to me.  
Lead on.—

Farewell, Antipater. [Exeunt.]

HEROD.

That's over. Would it were to do again!  
Her face—ha! ha!—her face was sure the  
servant

Of a most furious soul. I can believe  
it,—

That 'twas her plot; yet he must die for  
it.

And who can say Antipater is cruel  
When he doth give another that one  
thing

Which he desires,—a swift and sudden  
death?

What's cruelty? A tree whose roots split  
hell,

Whose crest disturbs the stars. Me-  
thinks my star

Hath long since been a cinder, and its  
fire

Is all here in my brain. Do men go  
mad

For dreading madness?

[Enter MARIAMNE.]

Ha! What wouldst thou?

MARIAMNE.

Madman!

Is this thing true?

HEROD.

Why dost thou call me madman?  
I am not mad.

MARIAMNE.

Is this thing true, I say?  
Hast thou given orders that he be im-  
prisoned?—  
Hyrcanus?

HEROD.

Wherefore didst thou call me madman?  
Thou never call'dst me so till now.

MARIAMNE.

Till now  
Thou ne'er wast mad. Give answer to  
my question.  
Hast sent Hyrcanus unto prison?

HEROD.

Ay.

MARIAMNE.

Thou hast?—O God, where is Thy  
justice?

HEROD.

Look you,  
Why said you I was mad? I am not so.  
Was I e'er calmer?

MARIAMNE.

Thou hast sent Hyrcanus  
To prison, under charge of treachery?—  
Hyrcanus,—he who was a king in all  
To make thee seem his sceptre's shadow!

HEROD.

Now—  
Why, now, now, now—look now how  
calm I am!  
Seem I a madman?

MARIAMNE.

—He who is still king  
By every right which cries thee wrong!  
—a man  
To make thy memory a woman,—one  
Beside whom thou dost show as black-  
ribbed clouds  
Against an evening sun! Thou send  
Hyrcanus

To prison? Thou? Thou,—Herod?  
 Now let Satan  
 Send God to hell that he may rule in  
 heaven!  
 What! he in prison at thy order?—he  
 Who even with sin dealt ever holily,—  
 He whose white hair the very winds did  
 reverence,—  
 He unto whom thy every dignity  
 Thou owest,—thy wealth, thy crown, thy  
 throne, thy sceptre,  
 That very power which now doth wrong  
 him! Oh,  
 Let me believe thee mad, ere that thy  
 reason  
 Cried “Amen” to this deed!

HEROD.

He is a traitor.

MARIAMNE.

And what art thou? thou who usurped  
 his throne,  
 Who filched his crown, who stole away  
 his sceptre,  
 Who hath his grandchild called adul-  
 teress?  
 Ay, what art thou, thou, sir, whose  
 name is Herod,  
 Whose heart is hell condensed?

HEROD.

Thou sayest, a madman.

MARIAMNE.

No! no! thou art not mad! Look not  
 like that.  
 When thou didst order him to prison,  
 then,—  
 Then wast thou mad. Not now; not  
 now.

HEROD.

I am not?

MARIAMNE.

No, no, I tell thee. What dost stare at?  
 Come,  
 Thou didst not mean it: I am sure o’  
 that.  
 Look! I’ll forget my wrongs,—all, all,  
 all, all,—  
 So thou dost not wrong him.

HEROD.

Why, it were madness  
 To set him free. I would not give the  
 people  
 So good a cause to say that I am mad.

MARIAMNE.

They could not have a better cause than  
 this  
 That now they have in his imprisonment.  
 What! will the foulest beggar in the  
 streets  
 Think that in sanity thou wouldst im-  
 prison  
 A gentle, fond, feeble, retired old man  
 For treachery? Nay, but believe me,  
 Herod  
 Thou’st ta’en the surest way to prove thy  
 madness.

HEROD.

Say it no more.

MARIAMNE.

Say what? That thou art mad?  
 Then give me no more cause to say it.  
 See!  
 I’ve forgot all but what should be re-  
 membered,—  
 That I am Mariamne and thy wife,  
 Thy queen, the mother of thy sons. Take  
 me,  
 And set Hyrcanus free!

HEROD.

What! wilt thou kiss me?

MARIAMNE.

Yes.

HEROD.

What! be as my wife again?

MARIAMNE.

Yes,—yes!

All that I was, and more, I will be,  
 Herod,  
 So thou dost set him free.

HEROD.

Wilt love me too?

MARIAMNE.

I will be all to thee that thou couldst wish.

HEROD.

Save loving?

MARIAMNE.

If thou dost find fault with me,  
Send me to prison in Hyrcanus' stead.

HEROD.

Then thou'lt not swear to love me?

MARIAMNE.

Oh, my lord,  
What deed could better merit love than  
this one  
I'd have thee do? As thou'lt some day  
be old,  
Think on his age, and do him reverence.

HEROD.

Nay,  
I am not old, and think of thee each  
moment.  
Is that the way to calmness?

MARIAMNE.

What's his crime?  
Or who hath slandered him? His innocence  
I'll prove sire, with my life.

HEROD.

[*Handing her Malchus's letter.*]  
Not with thy love?  
Read that. The governor's reply is here,  
On this side,—here.

MARIAMNE.

[*Reading.*]

Would go to Asphaltites  
And to Arabia. Would have an escort,  
He and my mother. Signed Hyrcanus.—  
Well,  
What's there of treachery? I see no  
harm here.

HEROD.

No harm? Thou seest no harm in it?  
No harm!  
No harm! No harm! But soft! soft!  
soft! Read on.  
Read Malchus' answer.

MARIAMNE.

Escort granted them;  
All done in's power to aid them; shelter  
promised  
Unto his party.—Well?

HEROD.

No,—ill, by God!  
Give me the papers: thou wilt tear  
them, girl.  
We'll see if that the Sanhedrim thinks  
with thee.  
No harm! [*Laughing.*] 'Tis harm to  
think there is no harm,

MARIAMNE.

Thou canst not purpose to submit those  
letters  
Unto the Sanhedrim?

HEROD.

It is my purpose,—  
This very moment.

MARIAMNE.

Herod, hear me!—Look!  
Look on me! Look, my lord!—I kneel;  
I kneel.  
Am I less fair than when thou loved'st  
me?

HEROD.

Wilt swear to love me now?

MARIAMNE.

All that a wife  
Should be I will be.

HEROD.

All save loving. Ay,  
Thou dost not love me, and he shall not  
live



To take the love that should be mine!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, hear me!

HEROD.

No more! no more!

[Enter Cup-Bearer.]

Ha, slave! what dost thou there?

CUP-BEARER.

My lord, I come on most important matters.

HEROD.

Important matters? Whom do they concern?

Hyrcanus?

CUP-BEARER.

No; the queen.

HEROD.

The queen? What queen?—Queen Mariamne? Well?

CUP-BEARER.

Yesterday noon,  
Your majesty, the queen did come to me  
And ask that I would help her brew a  
potion—

A love-drink—for your majesty. Being  
won

By much fine gold, I did consent, but  
afterwards

Bethought me that, not knowing all the  
contents

Of that which she had given me, 'twere  
best

Both for my lord and my lord's faithful  
servant

That I should tell my lord concerning it.

HEROD.

A love-drink! Ha! for me?—Madam,  
what's this?

MARIAMNE.

As bold a lie as ever was well lied.—

Sirrah, hast thou forgot my eunuchs'  
whips,  
That thus thou bravest me?

CUP-BEARER.

Your majesty,  
I've not forgotten them.

HEROD.

A love-drink! So!  
For me? Hast thou this drink?

CUP-BEARER.

Not now, my lord.  
Princess Salome hath it in her charge.

MARIAMNE.

[Aside.]

Salome!

HEROD.

Bid her here at once.

MARIAMNE.

What, Herod!  
Thou'lt hear thy slave and sister before  
me?

Canst thou not see he lies? Dost thou  
not know

He is in her employ and hired to lie?—

Thou craven hound! stir not until I bid  
thee.

Look in mine eyes and say those words  
again!—

Thou seest: he cannot do it. Mark him,  
sir:—

He cannot look at me.

HEROD.

Canst thou not so?

CUP-BEARER.

My lord, mistake me not; it is not fear  
Which keeps me from returning the  
queen's look,

But that my duty unto thee, my liege,  
Forbids that I should gaze upon thy con-  
sort.

HEROD.

Well said! Well said!—Madam, thou art rebuked.

MARIAMNE.

Rebuked! and by that worm? Thy queen rebuked!

And by thy cup-bearer?—Now long farewell,

Hyrchanus! Peace be thine,—as must be death.

I have done all for thee that woman could

And yet be woman.

HEROD.

Nay, what dost thou mean? Where art thou going?

MARIAMNE.

Where I'll find honour, sir,—Unto Hyrchanus.

HEROD.

I forbid it!

MARIAMNE.

I  
Am not to be forbidden. Stand aside. If thou art Herod, I am Mariamne, And queen unto the end, though crownless.

[Exit.]

HEROD.

So  
Then she is mad,—not I. I am not mad.

Who said so? No one. But they must not think so,—

Not think so, either. I will see a madman

And make comparison.—Ho, there! you, sir,

Do men run mad in Jewry?

CUP-BEARER.

Ay, my lord.

HEROD.

Hast thou seen any?

CUP-BEARER.

What? Madmen, my lord?

HEROD.

Ay, madmen.

CUP-BEARER.

Scores, my lord.

HEROD.

How looked they, slave?—Seemed they to be in any sort acquainted With their affliction?

CUP-BEARER.

Some did, sire.

HEROD.

Some did?  
They were not mad, then—no! they were not mad.  
A man may not be mad and know it, slave,  
Think'st thou?

CUP-BEARER.

Why, yes, my lord, sometimes.

HEROD.

Away!  
Away! thou traitorous hound! thou knave! thou villian!  
Out of my sight! Dost hint that I am mad?

[Exit Cup-Bearer.]

When Herod's mad, let God be writ a fool,

And wisdom's sucklings swarm the throne of heaven.

What! shall a man go mad and talk of it?

No! no! no! no! Cunning is twin to madness.

Madmen will swear unto their sanity  
With th' self-same ravings that proclaim them mad.

Why, I am calmer than I was a month—  
A week—a day—nay, even a moment  
past.

I let her go unhanded,—let her word me,  
Took even her insults calmly, where a  
madman

Had torn her into shreds,—ay, into rib-  
bons!

A potion? A love-potion? Let me see:  
That's not so bad. Methinks there's  
something here

Not altogether venomous. I'll ponder.  
What if she loves me after all?—would  
win me

By crafty means? I've heard that such  
things happen.

If that were so,—if this love-drink were  
harmless,—

If—ah! if Mariamne loveth me! Why,  
Though hell should burst in flames be-  
neath my feet,

I'd take her back again, and with my kis-  
ses

Make its worst blaze seem cool! Oh,  
I'm on fire,—

On fire! But let me recollect. The po-  
tion,—

He said he thought 'twas best to tell me.  
Why?

Why was it best? Sure there could be  
no harm,

Unless—unless—ah! there's the thing,—  
unless

He did suspect that it was poisoned.  
Ay,

There is a possibility. No matter!  
I will not think on it. She poison me?—  
She, Mariamne, poison Herod? Well,  
I'm glad I am not mad, since were I so  
I might have fall'n into this snare. And  
yet

It is enough to make a Solomon  
Cry Wisdom wanton, and as lawful wife  
Clip easy Foolishness. Now would to  
God

That I were mad, to know not of this  
horror!

Sweet Madness, come, come, come!  
Scoop out my brains

To feed thy henchmen and in this racked  
skull

Take up thy wild abode! Let every  
cranny

In my once-loving heart be packed with  
ravellings

From Fate's accurséd loom, snatch off  
my crown

To make the harlot Circumstance a  
zone,

And use my sceptre as a rod wherewith  
To scourge all wise men to thy ser-  
vice!

## SCENE II.

*A dungeon.*—HYRCANUS and ALEXANDRA.

HYRCANUS.

Good daughter, I am weary: loose these  
chains

A little.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, God help me, sir, I cannot!

Father, thou knowest with what joy of  
heart

I'd be there in thy place. Thou know-  
est that,

Dost thou not, father? Look! lean so,  
against me.

Is it not easier? Here's water, sir,  
If thou art thirsty.

HYRCANUS.

No, I'm only tired.

Thou think'st he'll let me see my little  
grandsons

Ere I am led to execution? Speak!

Dost not, good daughter?

ALEXANDRA.

Nay talk not like that.

He would not dare to kill thee.

HYRCANUS.

Ay, ay, ay,

He would. But Mariamne 'll plead for  
me?

Thou saidest so, didst not?

ALEXANDRA.

Ay, father.

HYRCANUS.

Well,

'Tis all with her. Why dost thou weep,  
my daughter?

ALEXANDRA.

Alas! how canst thou ask me why I weep?  
 Dost thou not suffer for me? Was't not I  
 Who lured thee to thy ruin? Did not I  
 Draw up that paper and then torture thee  
 Until thou'dst signed it? And am I not free,  
 While thou art fettered? I,—thy daughter,—I,  
 Who should have been the comfort of thy age,  
 The councillor of all to thy advantage,  
 Thy stay in time of trouble! Look, Hyrcanus:  
 I brought thee to thy death. Oh! curse me! curse me!  
 I kneel to hear thy curses as another  
 To receive blessings. Let me no more writhe  
 Beneath thy gentleness. Come, curse me! curse me!

HYRCANUS.

Good daughter, do not weep. If it be death,  
 Why, death and I are friends, and glad to meet.  
 And say not 'tis thy fault if that I die;  
 For in that letter there was naught, believe me,  
 To merit this the law's extremest course.

ALEXANDRA.

No: was there? Was there? Answer quickly, father.  
 Thou knowest I only wished to place thee, sir,  
 Beyond his reach.

HYRCANUS.

I know it. Do not weep.  
 I know it, daughter. Hark! I hear a footfall.  
 Hush! listen; listen.

[Enter MARIAMNE.]

ALEXANDRA.

Mariamne! Oh,  
 Thou'rt welcome, thou art welcome!  
 Yet thine eyes  
 Are not as I would have them.

HYRCANUS.

Pretty one,  
 How will it fare with me?

MARIAMNE.

As it should fare  
 With him who wrongs thee. Sire, he is  
 a monster,  
 And his heart petrified long ere this  
 hour  
 Into the corner-stone of a new hell.

ALEXANDRA.

And thou canst speak so calmly,  
 Mariamne?  
 Knowest his doom, and yet can tell him  
 of 't  
 With not so much as even one false note  
 In all thy soft voice-music?

MARIAMNE.

Am I calm?  
 I think I'm mine own ghost; for I feel  
 nothing  
 As I was wont to feel. I know the  
 headsman,  
 And sent his wife a brew only this  
 Nisan,  
 When she lay sick to death. There'll be  
 no mis-stroke.  
 Thou art not feared, sir?

HYRCANUS.

No, my pretty one,  
 I am not feared of anything but life,  
 Now that I have made friends with  
 Death. But, heart,  
 I'd say farewell unto our pretty boys.

MARIAMNE.

I'll call them.

[Exit.]

ALEXANDRA.

Devil! devil! Oh, this Herod!  
Lucifer were a paragon to him,  
And Satan lovable.—O God! O God!  
Instruct me how to demonize myself,  
That I may meet him on equality  
And curse him as a sister! Father,  
father,  
Art thou asleep?

HYRCANUS.

Almost. I am fast drowsing  
Unto the final moment, when my pillow  
Shall be the block, and all my dream-  
ing death.  
Peace! peace! weep not.

*Enter MARIAMNE, ALEXANDER, and  
ARISTOBULUS.*

Ah, pretty ones, come here.  
Thou lookest pale, my soldier. What's  
the matter?

MARIAMNE.

He hath not yet recovered, dear Hyr-  
canus,  
From witnessing his uncle's death.

HYRCANUS.

So! so!  
Well, he must not see mine.

ALEXANDER.

Oh, no! no! no!  
No! no! no! no!

HYRCANUS.

There, there, my prince, thou shalt not.  
Why, how thou tremblest! Look, I am  
to die,  
And yet I tremble not.

ALEXANDER.

I'd rather die  
Ten thousand thousand times than see  
thee killed.  
But then he cannot kill thee,—he cannot.

He is a devil, but he could not kill thee.  
Say that he could not, mother,—mother,  
say it!  
Oh, I did love him so! I loved him so!  
And now, whenever I do think of him,  
There is a shining redness comes be-  
tween us—  
Faugh!—and a smell of blood,—a thick,  
wet red,—  
A damp, fresh, sickening, faint, far-  
reaching smell!  
Oh, uncle! uncle!

HYRCANUS.

So! poor boy! poor boy!  
And I must die?

MARIAMNE.

Would I could die for thee!—  
Who's there?

*Enter Attendant and Herald.*

HERALD.

Hyrcanus, thou art summonéd  
To come straightway before the Sanhe-  
drim.

HYRCANUS.

Then kiss me, pretty ones. Come close  
to me.  
Nay, daughter do not weep. Come,  
Mariamne.  
Kneel for my blessing,—all of ye; kneel  
there.  
Where I can touch ye. Nay, come closer  
yet.  
The God of Israel forever keep ye,  
As I would keep ye, were I Israel's  
God,—  
Forever love, bless, guard, and cherish  
ye.  
Don't weep; don't weep! I can no more,  
my heart.  
Unloose this bracelet,—I have missed the  
clasp,—  
Wear it, and think sometimes of him who  
wore it.  
This for thee, boy,—and this for thee,—  
and this  
For thee, my daughter; all that's left,  
for Death.

Don't tremble, Alexander! this poor body  
Hath not sufficient blood to fill a goblet  
To Herod's health. Farewell,—farewell,  
—farewell!

[ALEXANDRA swoons.]

What, daughter! wilt thou go before me?

Why,

It is not like thee so to lack in deference.—

Look to her, sweet, and if in truth she's dead,

See that she be entombed with me.  
Farewell,—

Farewell,—farewell! Why, I am young again,

To think how soon I will be quit of age.  
Lead on. Hyrcanus is once more a king,

And goes to meet King Death as equal!

[*Exeunt HYRCANUS and Attendant.*]

MARIAMNE.

Father!—

Nay, let me not disturb him. Come, my boys,

Let's to thy father,—let's unto thy father

With this sweet news. Let's to him with our thanks.

Let's take him kisses,—ha! ha! ha!—such kisses!

Let's fall upon our knees to honour him.  
Was ever such a father? Come, let's hurry!

Let's kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss him!  
Run! run! run!

[*Exit, running, leading her two boys by either hand.*]

### SCENE III.

*A room in the palace.*

*Enter HEROD and SALOME.*

HEROD.

Thou canst not swear that it was poisoned?

SALOME.

No;

But can there be a doubt?

HEROD.

Ha!

SALOME.

I repeat it,

Can there be any doubt? She knows too well

That thou art but her fancy's slave, her toy,

To brew thee merely love potions.

HEROD.

Her slave?

I'll make thee slave to her! So? I a slave!

Thou hast a daring bent o' mind? Look thou!

Unless thou prove this love-brew poisonous,

Thou shalt in prison rot. As I am Herod,

I do believe thou'st lied from first to last

Concerning this affair and all that's touched it.

Thou art a most accomplished liar. Prove it,

Or I will make her ten times queen again,

And brand the hideous story of thy falseness

With red-hot irons on thy naked flesh,  
Then have thee whipped through every street and by-way

Of all the towns in Jewry, that all men  
May read of it! Away, and bring me proof,

Or look for death in agony unequalled!

[*Exit SALOME.*]

What if I've been deceived in everything  
From then till now?

*Enter MARIAMNE and boys.*

What! Mariamne?



MARIAMNE.

Ay.

Who looks like Mariamne, save herself?  
And these, sir, are her sons. She comes  
to thank thee—  
She and her sons—for thy last kindness  
to them.

HEROD.

Wilt thou not sit? Here is a chair.

MARIAMNE.

Nay, Herod,

I'd have mine eyes at level with thine  
own;  
And loving thanks are better proffered  
standing.

HEROD.

Why so?

MARIAMNE.

'Tis hard to give thanks graciously.

HEROD.

Not when 'tis Mariamne thanking Herod.

MARIAMNE.

More then than ever.

HEROD.

Say'st thou?

MARIAMNE.

Ay, my lord,—

More then than ever.

HEROD.

Why, right well thou knowest  
I'm always thankful to be thanked by  
thee.

Come, kiss me. For what wouldst thou  
thank me?

MARIAMNE.

For

Hyrceanus' death! Nay, kiss me! I am  
sister

To Aristobulus. Nay, wilt not kiss me?  
Thy treasurer Joseph loved me. Nay,  
now kiss me.  
I am the grandchild of Hyrcanus!

HEROD.

What! what! wilt thou dare?

MARIAMNE.

Then thou'lt not kiss me? Haply  
I am not looking fair enough to-day?  
I'll have a robe dyed in Hyrcanus' blood,  
And 'broidered richly with the hair of  
Joseph  
And Aristobulus, to wear withal  
When I would please thee. Come, a  
kiss,— a kiss.

HEROD.

Devil!

MARIAMNE.

Or, if that will not pleasure thee,  
I'll make a feast for thee, and in thine  
honor  
These thy two sons I'll have served up,  
with blood  
For wine.

HEROD.

Devil, I say!

MARIAMNE.

Or, if that dish  
Were something coarse for such a  
mighty king,  
Their hearts alone I'd offer thee.

HEROD.

God's heart!

Dost think I'll let thee live to mock me?

MARIAMNE.

No:

Killing's thy forte. I pray thee send me,  
sir,

To Aristobulus, and Joseph, and Hyr-  
canus.

Haply thou hast some tender message,  
sir,

That I could bear them? 'Tis the only  
errand  
On which for thee I would go willingly.  
Come, send me,—send me.

HEROD.

Can a man bear this  
And not go mad?

MARIAMNE.

Mad? Oh, no, thou'rt not mad.  
I'm mad, the time is mad, earth, sea,  
heaven, hell,  
The past, the future—but not Herod!  
No!  
He'll stand a monument to sanity  
When for some excellent reason he hath  
slain  
Everything save his reason!

HEROD.

God in heaven!

MARIAMNE.

Nay, God is not in heaven! If he were  
there,  
Herod would not be here! He travels,  
sir;  
There's a rebellion on some distant star,  
And He hath gone to quell it.  
Ay, in heaven  
Thou know'st but these three souls,  
Hircanus, Joseph,  
And Aristobulus. Cry out to them!  
Cry out to them! cry out to them!

HEROD.

Thou darest!  
Woman!

MARIAMNE.

Ay,—to my woe. The wife of Herod  
Should have by justice been a dragoness,  
Giving birth to monsters that had  
murdered him!  
Not unto men for him to murder.

HEROD.

Curse thee!

MARIAMNE.

Curse me, didst say?—curse me? Now,  
as I live,

May everything that hath on every  
world

Since the creation, died, be resurrected  
To curse thee with a separate curse!

Oh, demon,

Thou'st found the core of sin and eaten  
it.

What! thou wouldst curse me? Am I  
not accursed

Sufficiently in having been thy wife?  
Didst thou not curse me with a curse  
complete

When thou didst make me mother of thy  
sons?

Be thou accurséd, Herod, ay, accurséd,  
Beyond thy utmost knowledge of a curse.  
Forget that I once loved thee. Recollect.  
My hatred only. Thirst, thou shalt have  
blood,

And blood alone, to quench thy torment.  
Hunger,

Thou shalt not eat, but be thyself de-  
voured.

Cry out to heaven, and thy prayers re-  
bounding

Shall hurl thee into hell; while death to  
thee

Shall be one dream of life most horrible!

HEROD.

Oh, God!

MARIAMNE.

Ay, tremble; for He hears not thee,  
While Mariamne's curse is registered!

[Exit.]

HEROD.

What! Mariamne! Mariamne! Mari-  
amne!

Return! Thou canst not hate me! No!  
no! no!

That's to be mad,—to say that Mariamne  
Hates Herod. And I am not mad. I  
dreamed.

Then I am dead! She said that I would  
dream

Of life in death. Who said so? Mari-  
amne?

No,—one who looked like her. Yet  
there is none—

Not one who looks like her, saving her-  
self.

She said that, too. Her eyes! her eyes!  
her eyes!

They were two fires; they burned into  
my heart's core.

Nay, but my heart's a fire. My heart?  
What heart?

I gave my heart to Mariamne,—yea,  
And she fed anger on it. Well, I'm  
glad,

I'm glad, in spite of all, that I'm not  
mad;

Else might I think all this had really  
happened;

And now I know I'm dreaming.

*Enter SALOME.*

Good Salome,

Wake me, I pray you. [*Aside.*] But  
that's foolish: ay,

She's part and parcel of my dream.—  
Good sister,

How come you in my dream?

SALOME.

What! art thou mad?

HEROD.

No,—dreaming.

SALOME.

Why, that's madness on occasion.

Up! Rouse ye! rouse ye! Here's the  
potion.—Look!

HEROD.

Is 't poisonous?

SALOME.

Ay.

HEROD.

Then give it me.

SALOME.

For what?

HEROD.

To drink.

SALOME.

Go to! Why, thou art mad in verity.

HEROD.

Would that I were!

SALOME.

I say thou art.

HEROD.

Then once

Thou bringest me welcome tidings.

SALOME.

Brother.

HEROD.

Well?

SALOME.

What is the matter?

HEROD.

Why, I'm mad, I hope.

Thou saidst that I was mad, but then,  
good sooth,

Thou art a famous liar lied about.

But look thou, there's a something in  
me, jade,

That whispers madmen may go mad-  
der.

SALOME.

Sir,

Rouse ye. Look here: this is the love-  
potion

That Mariamne brewed to kill thee.

HEROD.

Ah!

SALOME.

If it be not a poison, I implore

That thou wilt torture me for pastime.

HEROD.

How!—

To kill me?

SALOME.

Ay: who else? Wake up! wake up!

HEROD.

Why, now, that's right. That is as I  
would have it.  
I would not longer sleep.

SALOME.

Then rouse ye! Here,  
Take 't in thy hand. There in thy palm  
thou holdest  
What might have been thy death.

HEROD.

Poison, thou sayest?

SALOME.

Ay, ay.

HEROD.

And brewed by Mariamne?

SALOME.

Ay.

HEROD.

By Mariamne for king Herod?

SALOME.

Ay.

All this thou knowest. Why wilt ques-  
tion me?  
It is for thee to prove if I speak truth.

HEROD.

And I will prove thee, monster! Ay,  
by heaven!

The dream is past, and Herod is awake,  
To sleep no more!—Without, there!

*Enter Attendant.*

Send me straightway

A slave from out the workers in the  
vineyard.

Thou shalt be proved. Fear not: thou  
shalt be proved,—

In all,—in all. But then I am not mad,  
If this is not a dream.—So! thou art  
come?

*Enter Attendant and Slave.*

Salome, here's thy proof,—a pretty proof.  
—What is thy age?

Boy.

A score of years, my lord.

HEROD.

Dost thou hate life?

Boy.

No, sire. Why should I hate it?  
I'm very happy.

HEROD.

Were't not better, boy,  
That thou shouldst part with it ere thou  
dost hate it?  
Give me thy answer.

Boy.

I know not, my lord.

HEROD.

I know, and will decide for thee. Drink  
this.

Boy.

[*Drinks.*]

Unto thy health, sire.

HEROD.

Ha!

Boy.

Oh, God! what's this?—  
—Water, I pray you.

[*Dies.*]

HEROD.

Thou art proved, Salome:—  
Salome, thou art proved! I will believe  
thee

Though thou shouldst say thou never  
wast a liar!

Almost a merry death this would have  
been.

It scarce had loosed my crown or stirred  
my sceptre.

Look how he's stretched,—as easily, I  
wager.

As were he sleeping in the vineyard sun-  
light.

I am not sorry that he's dead. No! no!  
He might have lived to be a Herod.

Ay,  
He might have lived to have a wife.

SALOME.

Come, rouse thee!  
Wilt thou hang thus above a dead slave's  
body?  
Away!

HEROD.

For what?

SALOME.

For vengeance! Dost thou ask me,  
And that thou mightst have been, there  
at thy foot?  
Away! to bring the would-be murderess  
To justice.

HEROD.

No! let justice go to her!  
I will not see her more, though we  
should live  
A million years within our voices' sound!

SALOME.

Live! dost thou speak of life as possible  
Unto that demon?—one who never loved  
thee?—

Who made thy love a means unto her  
ends?—

A traitress?—an adulteress?—Ay, thou'st  
said it!

Almost a murderess, quite one in heart!  
She who seduced thy sister's husband?—  
she—

HEROD.

Enough! enough! thou hast named  
crimes sufficient  
To make thyself seem holy in compari-  
son!

SALOME.

Sir!

HEROD.

Oh, be satisfied; be satisfied;  
She shall not live.

SALOME.

Now thou art Herod!

HEROD.

No,  
Now I'm a madman!  
[Exit, laughing.]

SALOME.

And now I have conquered!  
She is already 'prisoned, and I'll follow,  
To see that she doth soon meet death!

[Exit.]

#### SCENE IV.

*A dungeon. MARIAMNE chained.  
Two guards, talking.*

1ST GUARD.

She hath not said a word since I have  
watched her.  
Nor moved. I have not seen her weep,  
—not once.

2D GUARD.

Believe you all that's said of her?

1ST GUARD.

Not I.

2D GUARD.

In thine ear, friend: I do suspect foul  
play.

1ST GUARD.

Most like. Here comes the sister of  
the king.

*Enter SALOME.*

SALOME.

Slaves, where's the prisoner?

1ST GUARD.

There, madam.

SALOME.

Ah!

Good-morrow, madam. I do trust your queenship

Is in all things provided for? Not so? What! sulky? Fie! fie! fie! knit not thy brows.

I fear thou hast a temper, gentle queen. A queen should not indulge in mortal passions.

And, by the way, if any ill befall thee, I know 'twill comfort thee to think thy sons,—

Thy pretty sons,—Prince Aristobulus,—The one who trod upon my robe,—rememberest?—

And Alexander,—he who less resembles My husband Joseph,—that into my charge

They will be given. Ha! have I touched thee, harlot?

What! No word yet? Well, thy blood speaks for thee:

It ne'er leaped readier to Herod's kisses Than it doth to the words of Herod's sister.

Be honest, now: why didst thou lure my husband

From loyalty to me and to the king?

'Twas madness. Ay, thou mightst have known I'd trace it.

Come, now; speak. Tell me. Didst thou truly love him,

Or was't mere wantonness? Nay, do not die,

Of rage, before thy time,—thy time's so near,

Ha! ha! so near,—so near. Well, of thy sons

I'll promise thee one thing.

MARIAMNE.

What?

SALOME.

Ah, thou speakest!

Thou art not dumb, as I began to fear? I'll promise thee one thing,—but one, though.

MARIAMNE.

Well,

What is it?

SALOME.

Patience! patience!

MARIAMNE.

What is it?

SALOME.

I will not cuff them more than twice a day

Ha! ha! ha! ha! Have care,—have care, good girl!

Thou'lt die, if thou so giv'st thy fury vent.

MARIAMNE.

Joseph! Joseph! Joseph! rise from thy grave

And blast this devil with thy festering horror!

Leap to her arms all headless as thou art,

And vengeance my wrongs: I, Mariamne, summon thee.

Who was and am the Queen of Jewry!

SALOME.

Fiend!

MARIAMNE.

[*Breaking loose and seizing SALOME.*]

O God! Make me the tool to vengeance his murder!

Off, cords! Be brittle as all joy! Off! off!—

Ha! wilt speak more of cuffing?

SALOME.

Help, there! ho!

The queen is mad! Help! help! The queen is mad!

MARIAMNE.

One other cry, and thou shalt stand straightway

Face unto face with thy wronged husband's ghost.

Ay, presently I mean to send thee to him,

No matter what thou doest. Dost thou hear me?



First cry me pardon, though,—pardon,  
dost hear?—

And then to bloody Joseph!

SALOME.

Hold thy hands!

Thou'rt choking me.

MARIAMNE.

Presently,—but not yet.

My pardon.

SALOME.

Thou art mad! Well, pardon,—pardon.  
Now let me go.

MARIAMNE.  
[*Stabbing her.*]

Ay, unto Joseph! So!  
Know'st thou this dagger? I return it  
to thee!

SALOME.  
[*Swoons.*]

Oh! I am killed!

*Enter Guards.*

1ST GUARD.

Oh, heaven! what's this?

2D GUARD.

We will be put to death.  
Mark how she bleeds.

1ST GUARD.

Softly! she is but wounded.

2D GUARD.

Did the queen do it?

1ST GUARD.

Ay, she must have.

2D GUARD.

She's stiller, sir, than ever.

Look!

1ST GUARD.

Well,—I know not,—  
Mayhap the princess killed herself.

2D GUARD.

Soft, soft!  
She moves. She is not dead. Come on,  
sir; come.

[*Exeunt, bearing SALOME out.*]

MARIAMNE.

[*Staring at the blood left from SALOME'S  
wound upon the floor.*]

Why, her blood's red, like any other  
woman's!  
I had thought it would be black,—black  
as her soul,—  
As Herod's.

*Enter SARAMALLAS and SOHEMUS.*

SARAMALLAS.

Look, friend, how she stares!

SOHEMUS.

In truth,  
There's something here— What! blood?  
Look, Saramallas!

SARAMALLAS.

'Tis blood, assuredly. Look to the  
queen:  
She may have stabbed herself.

SOHEMUS.

Would God she had!

SARAMALLAS.

Ay, Sohemus, Amen with all my heart.  
Was his command to kill her final?

SOHEMUS.

Final.

SARAMALLAS.

And must she die? Is there no way?  
—not one?

SOHEMUS.

Thou knowest well that I would die to  
save her.

SARAMALLAS.

And thou'rt to take a napkin to the  
king  
Dipped in her blood?

SOHEMUS.

Oh, speak not of it, man!  
I love my mistress, and would kill ten  
Herods  
Rather than look to see one single hair  
Of her bright head disturbed.

SARAMALLAS.

Well, 't must be done.—  
Your majesty, the Sanhedrim—

MARIAMNE.

I know,  
I know, good Saramallas.—Sohemus,  
Good-morrow. It is well; I care not  
now.  
She's dead: my sons are safe. Thou,  
Sohemus,  
Protect them all that's in thy power from  
Cypros.  
Yet I do not much fear her, now the  
power  
That urged her is subdued. Good Sohe-  
mus,  
Cypros without Salome is a hell  
Without a devil. See they say their  
prayers,  
And do not break the Sabbath with their  
games,  
And letter-cutting on the lintels. Nay,  
Thou wast a boy, and know how boys  
will do it,—  
Even the gentlest.—Well, I'm ready.  
Come.

SOHEMUS.

Oh, mistress well beloved and always  
loving,  
Thou knowest that I'd rather suffer death  
Ten thousand times than see thee even  
unhappy.

MARIAMNE.

Yea, friend, even so. But once to suffer  
death  
Is nevermore to suffer anything.  
Therefore rejoice with me, whose not-  
long life  
Hath been so full of pain, I would not  
purchase  
Another day of life were't purchasable  
For the mere asking. I will bear thy  
love  
To Joseph. Nay, no tears, good Sohe-  
mus.  
Mine eyes are dry as are these breasts of  
mine,  
That once did nourish princes. Cease,  
I pray thee.  
I'll walk alone, a queen unto the last.  
[Exit.]

SCENE V.

*Enter HEROD.*

What, she prepare a poison for me! Oh,  
Foul, foul! She, Mariamne?—she, my  
queen?  
Nay, she was Joseph's wanton, not my  
queen.  
Was not that vile? But thus to seek my  
life,—  
That's viler. No, not that: to slay my  
honour,—  
That was more vile. And yet she might  
have known it,—  
That I would pardon her. But she must  
die,—  
She must die now. Die? Mariamne?  
Nay,  
He who doth spill a drop of her rare  
blood  
Shall kill his best-belovéd for my plea-  
sure  
Upon a holiday! What! die? Her lips,  
That I so oft have kissed, to rot i' th'  
tomb  
Like any beggar's? What! an end of all?  
All our soft hours, our million-plea-  
sured years,—  
Even our quarrelling? And yet, and yet,  
She plotted for my death. Soft, is that  
sure?  
Soft, soft,—Salome! But I saw him die

Die, with these very eyes. Oh, God! I  
 care not:  
 One kiss would make a thousand deaths  
 seem easy,  
 And there's no poison like to fruitless  
 yearning!  
 I care not what she purposed, I'll forgive  
 her,—  
 I will forgive her, and be writ forever  
 Herod the happy fool of Mariamne!  
 Ay, ay, a happy fool is wise in all things  
 Above the sourest knowledge-wrinkled  
 seer  
 That scoffs at him! Yes, yes, I will  
 forgive her,  
 And teach her not to hate me.

[Enter SOHEMUS.]

Ay, sir, thou—  
 Thou art the very man I seek. Good  
 Sohemus,  
 Attend. I did speak rashly to thee,  
 friend,  
 Some moments past.

SOHEMUS.

Rashly, my lord?

HEROD.

Ay, Sohemus.  
 There is a burning here doth sometimes  
 urge me  
 To violence whose half I do not mean.  
 I gave thee orders which I would re-  
 tract,—  
 I would retract.

SOHEMUS.

For God's sake, Herod, speak!

HEROD.

Why, what's the matter? Here, sir!  
 wouldst thou swoon?  
 What is the matter? I would have the  
 queen  
 Set free again. Dost hear?

SOHEMUS.

The queen is free.  
 Ay, Herod, she hath soared beyond thy  
 reach

Forever. Here's the kerchief thou com-  
 manded'st  
 That I should dip in her warm blood.

HEROD.

Thou liest!  
 What! dost thou dare to show me that  
 vile rag  
 And say 'tis stained with Mariamne's  
 blood?

SOHEMUS.

Ay Herod, I have but obeyed thy order,

HEROD.

Dog, thou dost lie! Who put thee to this  
 trick?  
 Where is Salome? She hath hired thee  
 to it.  
 Speak, sir! Where is she?

SOHEMUS.

Wounded unto death.  
 The poor queen, frenzied by her coward  
 taunts,  
 Did burst her bonds and stab her nigh to  
 death.

HEROD.

The poor queen? What poor queen?  
 What dost thou hint?  
 Dost dare speak thus of Mariamne? Go!  
 Bid her unto me. Bid her here, I say.  
 Away!

SOHEMUS.

Nay, Herod, be convinced. Thy queen  
 No longer lives: that blood is hers in-  
 deed,  
 And I the most unhappy man on earth!

HEROD.

Dost thou dare say thou art, when  
 Herod's here?  
 Thou most unhappy? Thou? O dog,  
 dog, dog!  
 Would thou hadst twenty lives, that I  
 might take them  
 Each in a different way! She's dead,  
 thou say'st?

And that's her blood? Back to her with  
this message:  
"My chief fault was obedience; and  
Herod,  
Being a madman, killed me for obeying."

*[Runs SOHEMUS through with his  
sword.]*

SOHEMUS.

I'm glad to go to her. Thou hast  
done well.

*[Dies.]*

HEROD.

That Mariamne's blood? Oh, God! let  
redness

Possess the earth, the heavens forswear  
their blue,

The sea its green! ay let the very stars  
Put on her color, and burn bloodily

To do her honor! I will build a pyra-  
mid

Unto her memory, and its littlest stone  
Shall twice outsize Cheops' entirety;

While for a mortar I will mix the dust  
Of emperors dead with blood of living  
kings!

To work! to work! for earth's founda-  
tion-stone

Must be the first in the tremendous pile!

*[Exit madly.]*

*Enter two or three attendants, running.*

1ST ATTENDANT.

Was't not the king?

2D ATTENDANT.

I'm sure I heard him.

3D ATTENDANT.

Ay,  
And so am I; but he's not here. Look  
there!

Is't not Lord Sohemus?

1ST ATTENDANT.

Ay,—dead, I think.

2D ATTENDANT.

Alas! alas! He had the kindest heart  
In all of Jewry.

1ST ATTENDANT.

So he had; and heaven  
Now hath his soul. Let's bear him  
hence. Come on.

*[Exeunt, bearing the body of SOHEMUS.]*

## SCENE VI.

*Another part of the palace.*

*Enter HEROD and ALEXANDER.*

HEROD.

Boy, where's thy mother? Where's thy  
mother, boy?

Speak, boy: I will not hurt thee. Look,  
I'm gentle,—

I am not angry. Look, I'll throw my  
sword

After my crown. Thou seest I recollect  
it,—

Thy insolent waggery,—ha! ha!—and  
yet am gentle.

Thou seest? Come, then, my pretty  
prince. Look here:

This ring for thee. Now tell me, where's  
thy mother?

ALEXANDER.

In heaven, where thou'lt never be, vile  
king.

Call me no more sweet names; for I do  
hate thee!—

Hate thee!—hate thee!—

HEROD.

What's that, thou devil? Ha!  
She taught thee that:

ALEXANDER.

She never taught me anything  
But what was good; nor could I teach  
myself

A better way of honoring her memory  
Than by abhorring thee!

HEROD.

Devil!

ALEXANDER.

I tell thee,  
Thou'lt be thrice damned, if after killing  
her  
Thou seek'st to kill her honour! Slay  
me! do!  
I'm not afraid. Thou'st thrown away  
thy sword;  
Then take thy hands. I ask no more,  
by heaven,  
Than to be sent to her!—Oh, mother!  
mother!

HEROD.

Where is she, then? Where is she?  
Tell me that,  
And thou shalt go to her. Don't weep;  
don't weep.  
Look, I am sorry if I called thee devil.  
Look,—for thou'lt see what no man saw  
ere this,—  
Herod a pardon-beggar. Look,—I'm  
sorry.

ALEXANDER.

Go beg of God; for I have naught to  
give thee  
Save only hate.

[Exit.]

HEROD.

Now know I thou'rt his son!  
No! no! no! no! I did not mean it!  
Oh,  
Return, return, my son, my Alexander,  
My son and hers! Or if that thou dost  
hate me,  
Be a dear hypocrite, and feign to love  
me!  
What's that, though? Soft! if one may  
feign to love,  
May not one feign to hate? Might she  
not so?  
She doth not hate me: no, she hath but  
feigned it,—

This hatred,—that I may her love more  
value  
When she confesses it.—Without, there!  
ho!

*Enter Attendants.*

Sirs,—bid the queen at once attend me.  
Quick!  
Why do ye stand there as though death  
had gripped ye?  
Summon the queen at once!

ATTENDANT.

What queen, my lord?

HEROD.

What queen, dog? Wilt thou give me  
back my words?  
What queen? Know that there is one  
only queen  
In Herod's catalogue. Call Mariamne,  
The Queen of Jewry; bid her come to  
me  
Here o' the instant. Oh, away with ye!

[*Excunt Attendants.*]

Now, shall all nights to this night be as  
leaves  
From Wisdom's tree, unto its golden  
fruit,—  
As sparks to stars,—as stars unto God's  
crown!  
Let some new God be born to conquer  
heaven,  
Dethrone Jehovah, and create new  
worlds  
For that prince who shall some day live  
as proof  
Of this night's wonder. Mariamne,  
come!  
I'll shake the stars from out their  
blackened sockets  
To light our bridal bed; the choir of  
heaven  
Shall chant us to our sleep; and for thy  
coverlet  
Thou shalt the mantle of God's glory.  
Shout,  
Ye tempest-riding spirits; earth, give  
voice;  
Resound, ye forests, like to harps; let  
ocean

Her cymbal-clashing waves send unto  
heaven  
And sweep down echo from the halls of  
Zeus!

Yea, let hell on the forehead of this  
night

Be bound as torch to light our ecstasy!

*Re-enter Attendants.*

So, sirs! Where is the queen?

ATTENDANT.

Thou must know, sire—

HEROD.

Must know? Is that an answer for thy  
king?

Call me Queen Mariamne from the  
doors.

Call her, I say.

ATTENDANT.

Oh, sire, the queen is dead.  
She was beheaded full an hour ago.

HEROD.

Damned be thy lying tongue! Away!  
away!

Or I will go myself to summon her!

*[Exit Attendants.]*

Beheaded? Mariamne? There was  
blood,—

Ay, there was blood,—but there's no  
sign in that.

A lamb's blood might stand proxy for  
a queen's,

And no one know the difference. Dead?  
Dead?

Were God to say it, I'd cry God a liar!  
Stay! something comes to me,—some-  
thing comes back.

I did commission Sohemus—The napkin  
Oh, God! it was her blood, and she is  
dead!

O Mariamne, Mariamne, Mariamne!  
What am I who have slain thee? Lucifer

Is holy unto Herod, for in truth

He was sin's victim, I the king of vice!

Beheaded? God, was there no other way

But death must roll that proud head on  
the ground

As children roll a ball? What! do I  
live

And Mariamne dead? What! am I  
Herod,

And Mariamne slain at my command?—

That Herod whom men call the Great?  
Just God!

Herod the Great? Ay! Herod the great  
in sin!

*[Falls forward on his face]*

AMÉLIE RIVES.

*[Princess Pierre Troubetskoy.]*

(1863 —)





# NATHAN THE WISE



## NATHAN THE WISE\*

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SULTAN SALADIN.  
 SITTAH, *his Sister*.  
 NATHAN, *a rich Jew of Jerusalem*.  
 RECHA, *his Adopted Daughter*.  
 DAJA, *a Christian woman, living in the Jew's house as Recha's companion*.  
 A YOUNG TEMPLAR.  
 A DERVESE.  
 THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM.  
 A LAY-BROTHER.  
 AN EMIR.  
 MAMELUKES *in Saladin's service*.

*The scene is in Jerusalem.*

### ACT FIRST.

#### SCENE I.

*A Hall in Nathan's House.*

NATHAN *returning from a journey*.  
 DAJA *meeting him*.

DAJA.

'Tis he: 'tis Nathan! God be ever  
 praised  
 That you're returned to us again at  
 last!

NATHAN.

Ay, Daja; God be praised! But why  
 "at last?"  
 Was it my purpose to have come be-  
 fore?  
 Could I have come before? for Baby-  
 lon  
 Is from Jerusalem, as I was forced

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To travel, turning oft to right and left,  
 A good two hundred leagues. Collect-  
 ing debts,  
 Besides, is not a work to be dispatched  
 In haste, or easily turned off.

DAJA.

Oh, Nathan,  
 What misery, what misery meanwhile  
 Might have befallen you here! Your  
 house—

NATHAN.

Took fire,  
 That have I heard already. God but  
 grant  
 I've heard the whole!

DAJA.

And might have easily  
 Been leveled with the ground.

NATHAN.

Then had we built  
 Another and a better.

DAJA.

True; but Recha,  
 Within a hair's breadth was she burned  
 to death.

NATHAN.

Burned!—who?—my Recha? That I  
 had not heard.  
 Why, then, a house I should no more  
 have needed.  
 Within a hair's breadth burned to death!  
 She was—

Was burned to death! Speak out—  
 speak out, I say!  
 Slay me and torture me no longer!  
 Yes,  
 She has been burned to death!

DAJA.

And if she were,  
 Should I be telling it?

NATHAN.

Why fright me then?  
 O Recha! O my Recha!

DAJA.

Yours—your Recha?

NATHAN.

God grant I ne'er may have to unlearn  
 the use  
 Of calling her my child!

DAJA.

And call you all  
 That you possess, with equal right your  
 own?

NATHAN.

Naught with a greater. All I else pos-  
 sess  
 Has been bestowed by Nature and by  
 Fortune.  
 This is the only gift I owe to Virtue.

DAJA.

O Nathan, what a price you make me  
 pay  
 For all your kindness! if aught exer-  
 cised  
 From such a motive can be called a  
 kindness.

NATHAN.

From such a motive? What?

DAJA.

My conscience—

NATHAN.

Daja,

Let me but tell you first—

DAJA.

I say my conscience—

NATHAN.

What stuffs in Babylon I bought for  
 you!  
 So precious and so tasteful. Recha's  
 own  
 Are scarcely fairer.

DAJA.

All in vain. My conscience,  
 I tell you, will no more be lulled to  
 sleep.

NATHAN.

And how you will delight in all the  
 jewels,  
 The rings, the clasps, the ear-rings, and  
 the chains,  
 That in Damascus I selected for you,  
 I'm eager to behold.

DAJA.

How like yourself!  
 You must be always giving, always giv-  
 ing.

NATHAN.

Take gladly, as I give you, and—be  
 silent!

DAJA.

Be silent! Doubts there any one that  
 Nathan  
 Is honor, generosity itself?  
 And yet—

NATHAN.

I'm but a Jew. Is that your meaning?

DAJA.

You know my meaning better.

NATHAN.

Then be silent.

DAJA.

I will be 'silent. What of guilt grow  
hence  
In sight of God, which I cannot pre-  
vent,  
I cannot change—cannot,—fall on your  
head.

NATHAN.

Fall on my head! But tell me where  
she is.  
Where tarries she? Ah, should you  
have deceived me!  
Knows she I'm here?

DAJA.

I might retort the question.  
Her every nerve still trembles with af-  
fright.  
Her fancy colors with a glow of fire  
Whate'er it paints. In sleep her spirit  
wakes;  
Awake, it sleeps: inferior now to  
brutes,  
Superior now to angels.

NATHAN.

Ah, poor child!  
What are we men!

DAJA.

This morning long she lay,  
With eyelids closed, as she were dead.  
Then quick  
Sprang up, cried, "Hark, my father's  
camels come!  
Hark, his own gentle voice!" Then  
drooped again  
Her eyelids, and, the arm's support  
withdrawn,  
Her head once more fell back upon the  
pillows.  
I hasted through the gate, and, lo!  
'twas you—  
'Twas you, indeed, approaching! And  
what wonder?  
For her whole soul has since been but  
with you—  
And him.

NATHAN.

And him! What him?

DAJA.

Who from the fire  
Preserved her.

NATHAN.

Who was that? Where is he now?  
Who was it that preserved my Recha  
for me?

DAJA.

A Templar, who, some days before a  
prisoner,  
Was hither brought, and pardoned by  
the Sultan.

NATHAN.

A Templar granted life by Saladin?  
Could no less miracle than this have  
saved  
My Recha? God!

DAJA.

And but for him who risked  
Again his unexpected boon, she had  
Been lost.

NATHAN.

Where is this noble man? Where is he,  
Daja?  
Conduct me to his feet. Whatever  
treasure  
Was left you, you bestowed on him at  
once;  
Gave all: with promises of more—much  
more?

DAJA.

How could we?

NATHAN.

Did you not?

DAJA.

He came, but whence  
None knew; he went, and whither none  
could tell.



A stranger to the house, his ear alone  
 To guide him, onward through the  
 smoke and flame,  
 With outstretched mantle, fearlessly he  
 pressed  
 Toward the voice that cried to us for  
 help.  
 Already had we given him up for lost,  
 When suddenly, from out the smoke  
 and flame,  
 He stood before us, bearing her aloft  
 In his strong arms. By our exultant  
 thanks  
 Unmoved, he laid his burden on the  
 ground,  
 Pressed through the multitude his way,  
 and vanished.

NATHAN.

But not, I hope, forever.

DAJA.

Many days  
 We saw him yonder, walking to and  
 fro  
 Beneath the palms that shade the sep-  
 ulchre  
 Of our ascended Lord. I went to him  
 With rapture; thanked him, praised,  
 commanded, begged  
 He would but once behold the grateful  
 girl,  
 Who could not rest till at her savior's  
 feet  
 She'd wept her thanks.

NATHAN.

Well?

DAJA.

Useless; he was deaf  
 To our entreaties and he poured, be-  
 sides,  
 Such scorn upon me—

NATHAN.

You were frightened off.

DAJA.

Nay; anything but that. Day after day

I went to him again; day after day  
 Let him again insult me. There is  
 nothing  
 I've not endured from him; nothing  
 that gladly  
 I'd not have still endured. But long he's  
 ceased.  
 To walk beneath the palms that shade  
 the grave  
 Of our ascended Lord, and no one  
 knows  
 His dwelling-place—You are amazed;  
 you ponder?

NATHAN.

I ponder the effect this must produce  
 Upon a mind like Recha's. To be  
 scorned  
 By one whom she is bound to prize  
 so highly:  
 To be at once repelled and yet attracted.  
 'Twixt head and heart long contest  
 must ensue,  
 If sorrow or misanthropy shall conquer.  
 Oft neither triumphs, and imagination  
 Becoming party in the strife, creates  
 A dreamer, in whom, now the head  
 usurps  
 The place of heart, and now the heart  
 plays head.  
 Sad interchange! If I mistake not  
 Recha,  
 The latter is her fate. She yields to  
 fancies.

DAJA.

But then so pure, so lovely!

NATHAN.

Fancies still.

DAJA.

Above the rest, one—fancy, if you  
 will—  
 She cherishes. Her Templar, as she  
 deems,  
 Is not a mortal being, not of earth.  
 One of the angels, to whose guardian  
 care,  
 Her little heart from childhood fondly  
 thought

Itself intrusted, stepped out from the cloud  
 Beneath whose veil he hitherto had hovered  
 About her even in the fire, and stood  
 Revealed as Templar.—Do not smile!  
 Who knows?  
 At least, if smile you must, do not destroy  
 A fancy shared alike by Christian, Jew,  
 And Mussulman,—so beautiful a fancy.

NATHAN.

And beautiful to me.—Go, trusty Daja,  
 See how she is—if I may speak with her.  
 Then I will seek this freakish guardian angel;  
 And if it be his pleasure still to dwell  
 Among us on the earth, and wear the guise  
 Of so unmannerly a knight, doubt not  
 I shall discover and conduct him hither.

DAJA.

You promise much.

NATHAN.

Should then this sweet conceit  
 Be changed to sweeter truth—for, trust me, Daja,  
 To human heart more dear is man than angel—  
 You'll surely not with me—with me—  
 be vexed.  
 If so this angel-dreamer shall be cured.

DAJA.

How good you are, and yet how bad withal!  
 I go. But hark! but see! She comes herself.

SCENE II.

RECHA *and the preceding.*

RECHA.

Is it in very truth yourself, my father?  
 I thought you had but sent your voice before.

Where tarry you? What deserts or what mountains,  
 What rivers, separate us now? One roof  
 Is o'er us both, and yet you hasten not  
 To clasp your Recha, who was burned  
 meanwhile!  
 Poor Recha! Almost, only almost  
 burned.  
 Nay, shudder not! Oh, 'tis an ugly  
 death  
 To die by fire!

NATHAN.

My child! my darling child!

RECHA.

You had to cross the Euphrates, Tigris,  
 Jordan,—  
 Who knows how many more? Oft for  
 your life  
 I trembled till the fire enveloped me;  
 But since the fire enveloped me, to die  
 By water seems refreshment, solace,  
 balm.  
 But you have not been drowned, nor  
 I been burned.  
 We will rejoice, and give God thanks.  
 He bore  
 Your boat and you upon the unseen  
 wings  
 Of angels over all the faithless streams;  
 He bade my angel visibly unfold  
 His snowy wings, and bear me through  
 the fire.

NATHAN.

(His snowy wings! Ah, yes; the Templar's mantle,  
 Outstretched and white.)

RECHA.

Ay; visibly to bear me  
 From out the flames, fanned backward  
 by his wings.  
 Thus have I seen an angel face to  
 face—  
 My guardian-angel.

NATHAN.

Recha would be worth  
 An angel's visiting, and would in him

See naught more fair than he in her  
beheld.

RECHA (*smiling*).

My father,  
Whom flatter you—the angel or your-  
self?

NATHAN.

Had but a human being, such a man  
As Nature daily grants, this service  
rendered,  
He must for you have been an angel;  
ay,  
He must and would.

RECHA.

Not such an angel. No;  
This was in truth, in very truth an  
angel.  
Have you yourself not taught me to  
believe  
That angels are; that God for them that  
love Him  
Can yet work miracles? I love Him.

NATHAN.

Yes;  
And He loves you; and hourly miracles  
For you, and such as you, is working  
now;  
From all eternity has worked them for  
you.

RECHA.

I love to hear it.

NATHAN.

Natural it sounds  
And commonplace to have a Templar  
save you;  
But is it therefore less a miracle?  
The greatest miracle of all is this:  
That true and genuine miracles become  
Of no significance. Without that won-  
der  
Scarce would a thoughtful man bestow  
the name  
On things that only children should ad-  
mire.  
Who, gaping, follow what is new and  
strange.

DAJA (*to Nathan*).

Would you to bursting strain her o'er-  
wrought brain  
With all your subtleties?

NATHAN.

Trust her to me!  
Were it not miracle enough for Recha  
To be delivered by a human being,  
Himself by no small miracle first saved?  
Not small indeed! Who ever heard  
before  
Of Templar being spared by Saladin—  
Of Templar asking to be spared, or  
hoping—  
Or offering more for freedom than the  
girth  
That holds his sword, or, at most, his  
dagger?

RECHA.

That proves for me, my father. For  
that reason  
He was no actual Templar—only  
seemed it.  
Since never to Jerusalem there came  
A captive Templar save to certain  
death;  
Since none e'er walked Jerusalem so  
free,  
How could one voluntarily, at night,  
Have come to save me?

NATHAN.

Most ingenious, Recha!—  
Speak, Daja; 'twas from you I learned  
he came  
A prisoner hither; you must know yet  
more.

DAJA.

So runs the story. It is said, besides,  
That Saladin preserved the Templar's  
life  
Because of the resemblance that he bore  
A favorite brother. But as twenty  
years  
Have passed away since this dear  
brother's death—  
His name I know not—know not where  
he died—  
It sounds so—so incredible the whole  
May be but fiction.

NATHAN.

Wherefore, Daja, sounds it  
 Incredible, but that you would believe—  
 As is the case—things more incredible?  
 Why should not Saladin, whose family  
 Are all so dear to him, in younger days  
 Have loved one brother with peculiar  
 love?  
 Look not two countenances oft alike?  
 Are old impressions, therefore, vanished  
 ones?  
 Works the same cause no longer one  
 effect?  
 Since when? Where lies in this the in-  
 credible?  
 Ah, my wise Daja, further miracles  
 There can be none for you. Your mir-  
 acles  
 Alone demand—deserve, I mean—belief.

DAJA.

You laugh at me.

NATHAN.

Laughed you not, too, at me?—  
 Thus was your rescue still a miracle,  
 Dear Recha, possible alone to Him  
 Who oft is pleased to guide, by feeble  
 threads,  
 The set decrees and purpose absolute  
 Of kings—his toys, if not his scorn.

RECHA.

My father,  
 If I am wrong, not willingly I err.

NATHAN.

Willingly rather learn. See now a fore-  
 head  
 Arched thus, or so; the outline of a  
 nose  
 Drawn this way more than that; brows  
 curving so,  
 Or so, according as the bone is sharp  
 Or round; a line, crease, angle, spot,  
 a nothing  
 Upon the face of one wild European—  
 And you are rescued from the fire in  
 Asia!  
 Is that no miracle, ye wonder-seekers?

What need to trouble an angel with it  
 then?

DAJA.

What harm—if I may speak—in the be-  
 lief  
 An angel rather than a man has saved  
 us?  
 Feel we not so much nearer brought to  
 Him  
 Of the deliverance the mysterious  
 cause?

NATHAN.

Pride, Daja, naught but pride! The iron  
 pot  
 Would have itself be lifted from the  
 fire  
 By silver tongs, that so it may be  
 deemed  
 A silver pot. Pah! What the harm,  
 you ask?  
 What harm? What good, I might re-  
 tort. 'Tis nonsense,  
 Or blasphemy, this "feeling nearer  
 God."  
 But harm it does—ay, actual harm; for  
 listen:  
 To your deliverer, be he man or angel,  
 Would you not both, and you especially,  
 Desire to render great and various serv-  
 ice?  
 But how perform such service to an  
 angel?  
 Thank him you can, and sigh to him  
 and pray;  
 Can melt away in ecstasies before him;  
 Can keep a fast upon his sacred day;  
 Can give your charities;—all that is  
 naught.  
 Your neighbor and yourself are more  
 the gainers,  
 It seems to me, than he. He grows not  
 fat  
 By all your fasting; all your charities  
 Make him not rich; no greater is his  
 glory  
 For all your ecstasies; his power no  
 greater  
 For all your faith. But, think him hu-  
 man now—

DAJA.

Ay, more, indeed, could we have done  
 for him

Had he been human. What our readiness,  
 God knows. But he was so above all wants,  
 Was in and for himself so all-sufficient,  
 As only angels are and angels can be.

RECHA.

And when at last he vanished—

NATHAN.

Vanished! How?  
 No longer showed himself beneath the palms?  
 Or have you really further searched for him?

DAJA.

That we have not.

NATHAN.

Not, Daja? See what harm!  
 You cruel enthusiasts! What if this angel  
 Had been—been sick?

RECHA.

Sick!

DAJA.

Sick! He cannot be!

RECHA.

A shudder chills me. Daja, feel—my brow,  
 So warm but now, is turned to ice!

NATHAN.

A Frank  
 He is, a stranger to our climate; young  
 To all the hard requirements of his Order—  
 To hunger, watching, unaccustomed.

RECHA.

Sick!

DAJA.

He only means that it were possible.

NATHAN.

See, there he lies, without a friend, or gold  
 To purchase friends—

RECHA.

Alas! my father!

NATHAN.

Lies  
 Without attendance, counsel, sympathy—  
 A prey to sorrows, and perhaps to death.

RECHA.

Where? Where?

NATHAN.

He who for one he never knew  
 Nor saw—enough it was a human being—  
 Had leaped into the flames—

DAJA.

Oh, spare her, Nathan!

NATHAN.

Who would not know more nearly,  
 would not see  
 What he had saved, that he might not be thanked—

DAJA.

Oh, Nathan, spare her—spare her!

NATHAN.

Had no wish  
 To see again, unless a second time  
 He might deliver; for enough for him  
 It was a human being—

DAJA.

Hush! Ah, see!

NATHAN.

He, dying, has no other solace, none,  
Besides the memory of his deed.

DAJA.

Hush! hush!  
You're killing her.

NATHAN.

And so did you kill him;  
Or so you might have killed him.  
Recha! Recha!  
'Tis medicine, not poison, that I give  
you!  
He lives! Come, be yourself! He is  
not sick—  
Not even sick!

RECHA.

Quite sure? Not dead? Not sick?

NATHAN.

Not surely dead; for God rewards even  
here  
The good that here is done. But have  
you learned  
That pious ecstasies are easier far  
Than virtuous deeds; how gladly idleness,  
Concealing its true motive from itself,  
Would stand excused from virtuous  
deed, and plead  
Its pious ecstasies instead?

RECHA.

My father,  
Leave, leave your Recha nevermore  
alone!—  
He has but left Jerusalem perhaps?

NATHAN.

Assuredly.—Yonder a Mussulman,  
With curious eye, observes my loaded  
camels.  
Look! Know you him?

DAJA.

It is your dervise.

NATHAN.

Who?

DAJA.

Your dervise; your antagonist at chess.

NATHAN.

Al-Hafi! That Al-Hafi!

DAJA.

Treasurer now  
Of Saladin.

NATHAN.

Dream you again? Al-Hafi!—  
'Tis he—'tis he, indeed! He comes to-  
ward us.  
Quick, back into the house!—What will  
he tell me?

## SCENE III.

NATHAN *and the* DERVISE.

NATHAN.

Now let your eyes be opened to their  
widest!  
Is it yourself or not? In this attire—  
A dervise?

DERVISE.

Well, why not? Can dervises  
Be turned to no account whatever then?

NATHAN.

To plenty. But I had supposed a der-  
vise,  
A genuine dervise, would be turned to  
none.

DERVISE.

By the Prophet! May be I'm no genu-  
ine one.  
Yet, if one must—

NATHAN.

Must—dervise? Dervise must?  
Nay, no man must; why must a dervise  
then?  
What must he, pray?



DERVISE.

What is desired of him  
In faith and honor, and he knows is  
right—  
That must a dervise.

NATHAN.

There you speak the truth.  
Let me embrace you, man, and call you  
friend!

DERVISE.

Before you learn to what I've been pro-  
moted?

NATHAN.

In spite of your promotion.

DERVISE.

I'm become  
A fellow in the State, perhaps, whose  
friendship  
Were inconvenient.

NATHAN.

I will take the risk,  
If but your heart continue dervise still.  
The fellow in the State is but your  
gown.

DERVISE.

But that craves honor too. What think  
you? Guess!  
What am I at your court?

NATHAN.

Dervise—no more;  
Unless you may besides be—cook.

DERVISE.

Go to!  
I shall unlearn my trade with you. A  
cook!  
Not butler too?—Confess that Saladin  
Could better read me. I'm his treas-  
urer!

NATHAN.

You—his?

DERVISE.

But of the smaller treasure, mind—  
That for his house. His father holds  
the greater.

NATHAN.

His house is great.

DERVISE.

Ay, greater than you think;  
For every beggar forms a part of it.

NATHAN.

Yet Saladin is so opposed to beggars—

DERVISE.

He would exterminate them root and  
branch,  
Though he himself thereby be made a  
beggar—

NATHAN.

I thought so.

DERVISE.

Is one now in fact. Each day  
His treasury contains, at sunset, less  
Than nothing. Let the tide be e'er so  
high  
At morning, long ere noon 'tis all run  
out.

NATHAN.

Because canals, alike impossible  
To fill or stay, are feeding from it.

DERVISE.

Right!

NATHAN.

I know it all.

DERVISE.

When princes are the vultures  
Amidst the carrion, that is bad enough;  
But when they are the carrion 'midst  
the vultures,  
'Tis ten times worse.

NATHAN.

Oh, never, never that!

DERVISE.

Ah, 'you may talk!—But come, what  
will you give  
If I resign my office to you? Eh?

NATHAN.

What yields your office?

DERVISE.

Me indeed not much;  
But for yourself 'twould yield abundantly.  
For when the tide is low, as low it will  
be,  
Lift up your own floodgates, let in  
your money,  
And take in interest whatsoever you  
will.

NATHAN.

Perhaps charge interest on the interest  
Of interest?

DERVISE.

Yes.

NATHAN.

Till my capital  
Becomes all interest.

DERVISE.

That tempts you not?  
Then write at once the quittance of  
our friendship;  
For I had counted much on you.

NATHAN.

How so?

DERVISE.

That you would help me hold my post  
with honor;  
Your purse be open always to my need.  
You shake your head?

NATHAN.

Let's understand each other.  
There's a distinction here. To you—  
why not?  
Al-Hafi, dervise, shall to all I have  
Be ever warmly welcome. But Al-  
Hafi,  
The treasurer of the Sultan—he—to  
him—

DERVISE.

Did I not guess it?—How your good-  
ness ever  
Keeps pace with prudence, prudence  
with your wisdom;  
But patience, and this difference in  
Al-Hafi,  
Shall trouble you no more.—Behold  
this robe  
Of honor that the Sultan decked me  
with.  
Ere it be faded and in rags, fit clothing  
For dervise' wear, within Jerusalem  
It shall be hanging, while beside the  
Ganges,  
Barefoot and light, I walk the burning  
sands  
Among my teachers.

NATHAN.

Like yourself!

DERVISE.

And play  
At chess with them.

NATHAN.

Your highest good.

DERVISE.

Consider  
 What tempted me;—that I might beg  
 no longer?  
 Might play the part of rich man  
 amongst beggars?  
 Might have the power of making in a  
 twinkling  
 A poor rich man out of the richest  
 beggar?

NATHAN.

Not surely that.

DERVISE.

Far more absurd than that.  
 The first time in my life I had been  
 flattered,  
 By Saladin's kind-hearted fancy flat-  
 tered.

NATHAN.

What fancy?

DERVISE.

That a beggar only knew  
 The feelings of a beggar that a beggar  
 Alone had learned kind dealings with a  
 beggar.  
 "Your predecessor," he said, "was cold  
 and harsh.  
 He gave unkindly, if he gave at all;  
 Must always first ungraciously inquire  
 About the asker—not content to know  
 He was in want; he must discover, too,  
 The reason of the want, and make his  
 gifts,  
 His stingy gifts, proportionate to that.  
 Not so Al-Hafi. So unkindly kind  
 He will not suffer Saladin to seem.  
 Al-Hafi is not like those foul, clogged  
 pipes,  
 That give back troubled and impure  
 the water  
 That was so clear and still when they  
 received it.  
 Al-Hafi thinks, Al-Hafi feels with me."  
 Thus sweetly sang the fowler's voice,  
 and lured  
 The silly bird within the net. O fool!  
 The fool too of a fool.

NATHAN.

But gently, gently,  
 My dervise!

DERVISE.

What! Is it not a foolery  
 To oppress one's brother-men by hun-  
 dreds, thousands—  
 To waste their strength, to plunder,  
 torture, kill them—  
 Yet wish to appear the savior of a  
 few?  
 Is it not foolery to try to ape  
 The mercy of the Highest—who, im-  
 partial,  
 On evil and on good, on field and  
 waste,  
 Spreadeth Himself abroad in sun and  
 rain—  
 Yet not to have the overflowing hand  
 Of the Almighty? Is't not foolery?

NATHAN.

Enough! Have done!

DERVISE.

Not till I have confessed  
 My equal foolery. Say, was it none  
 In me that I was always tracing out  
 The kindly side of fooleries like these,  
 As my apology for sharing in them?  
 Call you that none?

NATHAN.

Al-Hafi, make all haste  
 To get into your wilderness again.  
 I fear lest, living among men, you'll  
 cease  
 To be a man yourself.

DERVISE.

I fear it too.  
 Farewell!

NATHAN.

So hasty? Hold, Al-Hafi, hold!  
 Fear you the desert will escape? Stay  
 —stay!

Will he not hear me? Ho, Al-Hafi—  
here!  
No, he is gone; and I had asked so  
gladly  
About our Templar: he must know the  
knight.

## SCENE IV.

DAJA *entering hastily*. NATHAN.

DAJA.

O Nathan. Nathan!

NATHAN.

Well, what is it, Daja?

DAJA.

He has appeared again—appeared  
again!

NATHAN.

Who, Daja?

DAJA.

He!

NATHAN.

He? When appeared *he* not?  
Aha! 'tis only *your* he that is *he*.  
That is not well; not though he were  
an angel.

DAJA.

Beneath the palms he's walking to and  
fro,  
And breaking ever and anon the dates.

NATHAN.

And eating? As a Templar?

DAJA.

Tease me not!  
Beneath the palm-trees' thickly woven  
shade  
Her greedy eye discovered him, and  
follows

Unwaveringly; and she entreats, con-  
jures you,  
Without delay, to go to him. Oh,  
haste!  
She's at her window, and will sign to  
you  
Which way to seek him. Haste!

NATHAN.

Just from my camels?  
Would that be courteous? Haste to  
him yourself,  
And tell him my return. It was his  
honor  
Alone forbade his entering my house  
While I was absent. He'll be glad to  
come  
When 'tis the father that invites him.  
Go,  
Say I invite him, cordially, invite—

DAJA.

In vain; he will not come to you. In  
short,  
He comes not to a Jew.

NATHAN.

Yet go; at least  
Detain him, or, best, keep your eye  
upon him.  
Go first; I follow instantly. Go—go!

## SCENE V.

*A square planted with palm-trees, un-  
der which the TEMPLAR is walking  
to and fro. A LAY-BROTHER follows  
him at a little distance, as if he would  
speak with him.*

TEMPLAR.

'Tis not from idleness he follows me.  
See how he glances towards my hands.  
—Good brother—  
Or may I call you father?

LAY-BROTHER.

Brother only.  
A poor lay-brother only, at your serv-  
ice.

TEMPLAR.

Good brother, had I aught myself—By  
heaven,  
By heaven, I've nothing—

LAY-BROTHER.

Still, take hearty thanks.  
May God return to you a thousand-  
fold  
What you would give me. For the  
will it is  
That makes the giver—not the gift.  
Besides,  
I was not sent to beg the knight for  
alms.

TEMPLAR.

Then you were sent?

LAY-BROTHER.

Yes; from the monastery.

TEMPLAR.

Where I had hoped but now to find a  
morsel  
Of pilgrim's fare?

LAY-BROTHER.

The tables then were filled.  
But let the knight return with me.

TEMPLAR.

Why so?  
'Tis many a day since I have tasted  
meat.  
Besides, what need? The dates are  
ripe.

LAY-BROTHER.

The knight  
Should be upon his guard against the  
fruit;  
Too much is dangerous. It clogs the  
spleen,  
Breeds melancholy.

TEMPLAR.

And what now if I like  
This melancholy? But to give that  
warning  
You were not sent.

LAY-BROTHER.

Oh, no; I was but sent  
To sound the knight somewhat—to feel  
his pulse.

TEMPLAR.

You tell me that yourself?

LAY-BROTHER.

And wherefore not?

TEMPLAR.

(A crafty brother.) Does the mon-  
astery  
Have many such as you?

LAY-BROTHER.

I do not know.  
I must obey, sir knight.

TEMPLAR.

So you obey,  
And ask no questions?

LAY-BROTHER.

Were aught else obeying,  
Sir knight?

TEMPLAR.

(See how simplicity is sure  
To come off best!) Could you not  
further tell  
The name of him who seeks such  
knowledge of me?  
My oath, 'tis not yourself.

LAY-BROTHER.

Were it becoming  
In me, or profitable?

TEMPLAR.

Whom could it profit,  
Or whom become to be so curious?

LAY-BROTHER.

The Patriarch, I conclude, since he it  
was  
Who sent me here.

TEMPLAR.

The Patriarch? Knows he not  
The white cloak's bloody cross?

LAY-BROTHER.

Even I know that.

TEMPLAR.

Well then! I am a Templar, and a  
captive.  
And if I add that I was taken at  
Tebnin,  
The fortress that we vainly tried to  
scale  
Before the truce expired, and thus lay  
open  
A passage into Sidon,—if I add,  
That twenty more were taken captive  
with me,  
But I alone received the Sultan's par-  
don,—  
Then has the Patriarch all he needs  
to know—  
More than he needs.

LAY-BROTHER.

Scarce more, though, than he knew.  
He fain would know the reason why  
the knight  
Was pardoned by the Sultan—he alone.

TEMPLAR.

I know not that myself. My neck was  
bared,  
And on my mantle kneeling I awaited  
The final stroke, when more intent his  
eyes  
The Sultan fixes on me, toward me  
springs,

And motions. I am raised; my chains  
fall off;

I try to thank him; tears are in his  
eyes;

Silent is he—am I; he goes, I stay.  
What now the meaning of it all may be,  
The Patriarch must unriddle for him-  
self.

LAY-BROTHER.

His inference is that God must have  
reserved you  
For great, great enterprises.

TEMPLAR.

Great, indeed!  
For rescuing a Jewess from the fire,  
Conducting curious pilgrims up Mount  
Sinai,  
And more as great.

LAY-BROTHER.

The rest will come. Meanwhile  
'Tis not a bad beginning. Greater  
things  
Already for the knight the Patriarch  
May have in store.

TEMPLAR.

Ah, brother, think you so?  
Has any hint been dropped of such?

LAY-BROTHER.

Ay, ay.  
But first I am to sound the knight to  
learn  
If he's the man.

TEMPLAR.

All right; sound on! (Let's see  
How he will sound me!) Well?

LAY-BROTHER.

The shortest way  
Were honestly to set before the knight  
The Patriarch's wish.

TEMPLAR.

Good!



LAY-BROTHER.

He desires to send  
A little letter by the knight.

TEMPLAR.

By me?  
I am no carrier. So then, that's the  
work  
He holds more glorious than the rescu-  
ing  
A Jewess from the fire?

LAY-BROTHER.

It must be; for—  
The Patriarch says—upon this little  
letter  
The interests of all Christendom de-  
pend.  
God will reward the safe delivery  
of it—  
The Patriarch says—with a peculiar  
crown  
In heaven; and of this crown—the  
Patriarch says—  
Is none more worthy than the knight.

TEMPLAR.

Than I?

LAY-BROTHER.

Because to earn this crown—the Patri-  
arch says—  
Is none more fitted than the knight.

TEMPLAR.

Than I?

LAY-BROTHER.

You have your freedom here; can  
everything  
Examine at your will; you understand  
How cities should be stormed, and how  
defended;  
Can duly estimate—the Patriarch says—  
The strength and weakness of that in-  
ner wall  
Just built by Saladin; and can minutely  
Describe it to the soldiers of the Cross.

TEMPLAR.

Could you not further tell me the con-  
tents,  
Good brother, of the letter?

LAY-BROTHER.

The contents—  
I know not quite myself. But to King  
Philip  
The letter is addressed. The Patri-  
arch—  
I oft have wondered that a holy man,  
Whose walk is else in heaven, should  
deign to keep  
So well informed of the affairs of  
earth.  
It must be very burdensome to him.

TEMPLAR.

Go on; the Patriarch—

LAY-BROTHER.

Knows beyond a doubt  
Exactly how and where, with how great  
force,  
From what direction, Saladin will open  
The next campaign, should war break  
out afresh.

TEMPLAR.

He does?

LAY-BROTHER.

He does, and would inform King  
Philip;  
That he may judge if danger be so  
great,  
'Twere better to renew at any cost  
The truce with Saladin, so lately broken  
By your brave Order.

TEMPLAR.

What a Patriarch!  
No common messenger he seeks in me,  
Good honest man; he wants—a spy.  
Go, tell him,  
As far as you could sound me, worthy  
brother.  
He had mistaken his man; that I am  
bound

To hold myself still captive; and that  
 Templars  
 Have one profession, that of arms—  
 know naught  
 Of playing the spy.

LAY-BROTHER.

I thought so! None the worse  
 My judgment of the knight. The best  
 remains.

The Patriarch has ferreted out the fort-  
 ress,

What name it bears, and where on Leb-  
 anon

It lies, wherein are stored the enormous  
 sums

From which the Sultan's prudent father  
 pays

The army, and defrays all costs of war.  
 Thither, from time to time, the Sultan  
 goes,

By lonely roads, and almost unattended,  
 You understand?

TEMPLAR.

Not I!

LAY-BROTHER.

How easy now  
 To overpower the Sultan, or—dispatch  
 him.

You shudder? Nay; two pious Maro-  
 nites

Have volunteered already for the deed,  
 If but some valiant man be found to  
 lead them.

TEMPLAR.

And did the Patriarch look to me again  
 To be this valiant leader?

LAY-BROTHER.

He believes  
 That out of Ptolemais can King Philip  
 Give most effectual aid.

TEMPLAR.

To me—to me?  
 Have you not heard, have you not just  
 been told,

What obligations bind me to the Sul-  
 tan?

LAY-BROTHER.

I heard.

TEMPLAR.

And yet—

LAY-BROTHER.

Oh, yes—the Patriarch says—  
 That may be very well; but God, your  
 Order—

TEMPLAR.

Change naught; command no villainy!

LAY-BROTHER.

Oh, no;  
 But then—the Patriarch says—a vil-  
 lainy

In man's esteem may not be one in  
 God's.

TEMPLAR.

My life I owe the Sultan. Shall my  
 hand  
 Rob him of his?

LAY-BROTHER.

As long—the Patriarch says—  
 As Saladin remains the enemy  
 Of Christendom, he can acquire no  
 right  
 To be your friend.

TEMPLAR.

My friend? A man to whom  
 I only would not play the thankless  
 villain.

LAY-BROTHER.

True; but—the Patriarch says—the debt  
 of thanks

Is canceled, canceled before God and  
 man,

For service rendered on account of  
 others.

And as—the Patriarch says—it is re-  
 ported

The Sultan spared you only for a some-  
 thing,

In face or bearing, that recalled a brother—

TEMPLAR.

That too the Patriarch knew; and even yet—

Oh were I sure of that! Ah, Saladin! Could Nature fashion but a single feature

In likeness of your brother, yet my soul Receive no answering trait; or could such trait,

To do a Patriarch's pleasure, be suppressed?

Nature, so liest thou not; not so does God

Belie Himself upon His works! Go, brother;

Provoke me not to anger. Go!

LAY-BROTHER.

I go;

And readier than I came. Forgive me, knight.

We brothers have no choice but to obey.

SCENE VI.

*The TEMPLAR and DAJA. DAJA has been watching from a distance, and now approaches.*

DAJA.

The brother's visit left him not, methinks,

In happiest humor. Still, I needs must venture.

TEMPLAR.

Ah, excellent! The proverb holds—that monk

And woman, woman and monk, are Satan's claws.

To-day he throws me to and fro between them.

DAJA.

Do I again behold you, noble knight? Thank God a thousand times! But where so long

Have you been hiding? Not been sick, I hope?

TEMPLAR.

No.

DAJA.

Well, then?

TEMPLAR.

Yes.

DAJA.

We have been anxious for you.

TEMPLAR.

Indeed!

DAJA.

Have you been on a journey?

TEMPLAR.

Yes.

DAJA.

And just returned today?

TEMPLAR.

No; yesterday.

DAJA.

To-day has Recha's father too returned. Now may not Recha hope?

TEMPLAR.

For what?

DAJA.

For that She has so often begged. Her father too

Will soon himself most pressingly invite you.

He comes from Babylon, with twenty camels

Piled high with precious spices, stones, and stuffs,

The rich returns of India, Persia,  
 Syria—  
 Of China even.

TEMPLAR.

I do not buy.

DAJA.

His people  
 Revere him as a prince; yet why 'the  
 wise'  
 They call him, not 'the rich,' I often  
 wonder.

TEMPLAR.

To them, perchance, are rich and wise  
 the same.

DAJA.

Good should they call him first. How  
 good he is  
 You cannot think. When Recha's debt  
 to you  
 Was told him, there was nothing in that  
 moment  
 He'd not have done for you or given.

TEMPLAR.

Indeed!

DAJA.

Try him, and see!

TEMPLAR.

How soon a moment passes?

DAJA.

Were he less good, should I have been  
 content  
 So long to dwell with him? You think,  
 perhaps,  
 I do not feel my dignity as Christian?  
 Nor in my cradle was it e'er foretold  
 That for this very cause to Palestine  
 I should accompany my wedded lord,  
 There to bring up a Jewish girl. My  
 husband,

A noble squire in Emperor Frederick's  
 army—

TEMPLAR.

By birth a Swiss, to whom had been  
 accorded  
 The glory of drowning in the selfsame  
 stream  
 With his Imperial Majesty. O woman,  
 How often have you told me that be-  
 fore?

Is there no end to your pursuing me?

DAJA.

Pursuing?

TEMPLAR.

Yes, pursuing. I'll not see  
 Nor hear you more; I will not be re-  
 minded  
 Forever by you of a deed I did  
 Without a thought; a riddle to myself  
 Whene'er I think of it. Not willingly  
 Would I repent it; but should such a  
 chance  
 Again occur, you'll have yourself to  
 blame  
 If I'm a trifle slower, stop to question,  
 And let what's burning, burn.

DAJA.

May God forbid!

TEMPLAR.

From this day forth, grant me at least  
 the favor  
 Of knowing me no more. I beg it of  
 you.  
 Keep too the father from me. Jew is  
 Jew.  
 I am a clumsy Swabian. Long ago  
 The maiden's image faded from my  
 soul,  
 If it were ever there.

DAJA.

Not yours from hers.

TEMPLAR.

And what of that?

DAJA.

Who knows? Men are not always  
The thing they seem.

TEMPLAR.

Yet seldom better. [*Is going.*]

DAJA.

Stay;  
Why haste you?

TEMPLAR.

Woman, do not make these palms,  
'Neath which I've loved to walk, grow  
hateful to me.

DAJA.

Go then, you Northern bear! Go—go!  
And yet  
I must not lose the monster out of  
sight.

[*She follows him at a distance.*]

## ACT SECOND.

### SCENE I.

*Room in the Sultan's palace. SALADIN  
and SITTAH at chess.*

SITTAH.

Where are you, Saladin? Why, how  
you play!

SALADIN.

Not well? I thought I did.

SITTAH.

For me: yet hardly.  
Take back that move.

SALADIN.

Why so?

SITTAH.

The knight's exposed.

SALADIN.

True: so, then!

SITTAH.

Then I shall step in between.

SALADIN.

You're right again. Then check!

SITTAH.

What use in that?  
I interpose, and you are where you  
were.

SALADIN.

From this dilemma is there no escape,  
Except by paying? Well, then take my  
knight.

SITTAH.

I want him not; I let him stand.

SALADIN.

No favor.  
The place was more important than the  
piece.

SITTAH.

May be.

SALADIN.

But reckon not without your host.  
See! had you looked for that?

SITTAH.

I'd not, indeed;  
How could I think you weary of your  
queen?

SALADIN.

My queen?

SITTAH.

Beyond my thousand denarii,  
No fraction shall I win to-day, I see.

SALADIN.  
How so?

SITTAH.

You ask? Because with all your  
might  
You will be beaten. That's no gain to  
me.  
Small pleasure can one take in games  
like that.  
Besides, win I not always most from  
you  
When I have lost? When have you  
failed to send  
The double of the stake, to comfort me  
For my defeat?

SALADIN.

Ah! so, my little sister,  
When you have lost, you lost on pur-  
pose—eh?

SITTAH.

Your generosity at least, dear brother,  
May be to blame that I'm no better  
player.

SALADIN.

But we forget our game. Come, make  
an end!

SITTAH.

How stands it? So then, check, and  
double check!

SALADIN.

That double check I truly had not seen.  
It robs me of my queen.

SITTAH.

Could you have helped it?  
Let's see!

SALADIN.

No, no; take off the queen. I  
ne'er  
Was lucky with the piece.

SITTAH.

Only the piece?

SALADIN.

Away with her! No harm is done; for  
thus  
All's safe again.

SITTAH.

Well has my brother taught  
The courtesy that should be showed to  
queens. [*Leaves her.*]

SALADIN.

Take her or take her not! I have no  
other.

SITTAH.

Why should I take her? Check! check!

SALADIN.

Keep on!

SITTAH.

Check!

And check! and check!

SALADIN.

And mate!

SITTAH.

Not quite; your knight  
Can interpose, or what you will; all one.

SALADIN.

Right! You have won, and Hafi pays.  
Go, call him!—

You guessed aright, dear Sittah; for my  
mind

Was not intent upon the game—it wan-  
dered.

Besides, who gives us these smooth  
pieces always,

That have no meaning, no suggestion in  
them?

Have I not played with the Imam him-  
self?—



Defeat but seeks excuse. 'Twas not alone  
The shapeless pieces, Sittah, made me lose.  
Your skill, your sharper, quicker eye—

SITTAH.

There, too,  
You would but blunt the sting of your defeat.  
Enough, you were preoccupied; even more  
Than I.

SALADIN.

Than you? What had you on your mind?

SITTAH.

Not your anxiety.—O Saladin,  
When shall we play so heartily again?

SALADIN.

We'll play but so much the more eagerly.  
Because there's to be war again, you mean?  
So be it! Forward! I did not begin.  
I gladly would have had the truce renewed:  
Gladly, most gladly, would have given my Sittah  
A noble husband, too, as Richard's brother  
Had surely been. Is he not Richard's brother?

SITTAH.

Ah, if you can but sing your Richard's praises!

SALADIN.

If Richard's sister, then, could have become  
Our brother Melech's wife—Ah, what a house!  
Of all the best, first houses in the world,  
The best, the first. You see I am not slow  
To praise myself. I do not deem myself  
Unworthy of my friends. What men had then  
Been born into the world!

SITTAH.

Did I not laugh  
From the beginning at your beauteous dreams?  
You do not know, you will not know the Christians.  
Christianity, not manhood, is their pride.  
E'en that which from their founder down has spiced  
Their superstition with humanity,  
'Tis not for its humanity they love it.  
No; but because Christ taught, Christ practiced it.  
Happy for them he was so good a man!  
Happy for them that they can trust his virtue!  
His virtue? Not his virtue, but his name,  
They say, shall spread abroad, and shall devour  
And put to shame the names of all good men.  
The name, the name is all their pride.

SALADIN.

Why else,  
You think, should they require of you and Melech  
To take the Christian name, ere you could love  
A Christian consort?

SITTAH.

Yes; as if in Christians,  
As Christians only, could exist that love  
With which, in the beginning, God endowed  
Both man and woman.

SALADIN.

Poor conceits too many  
The Christians hold, not to believe that also.  
And yet you err. The Templars, not the Christians,  
Are here to blame; are not to blame as Christians,  
But Templars. They it is who bring our plans  
To naught. They will not lose their hold on Acca,

Which Richard's sister, as her dower,  
would bring  
To Melech. Lest the knightly interest  
Should suffer loss, they play the silly  
monk.

A sudden blow they think may have  
success,  
And scarce can wait until the truce be  
o'er.—

Keep on, my masters, on! I'm well  
content.

Were but all else as I would have it!

SITTAH.

What? What?  
What else disturbed you—so could ruffle  
you?

SALADIN.

What always has disturbed me. I have  
been

Upon Mount Lebanon; I've seen our  
father.

His cares still burden him.

SITTAH.

Alas!

SALADIN.

Escape

There's none; on every side he's  
cramped; feels lack,

Now here, now there.

SITTAH.

What is it lacks? What cramps him?

SALADIN.

What else but that I hardly deign to  
name;

Which, when I have, seems worthless;  
but when not,

Is indispensable?—Where tarries Hafi?  
Was he not called?—This fatal, cursed  
gold!

Good, Hafi, that you're come.

SCENE II.

*The dervise* AL-HAFI. SALADIN. SITTAH.

AL-HAFI.

The gold from Egypt  
Has then arrived. There need be plenty  
of it.

SALADIN.

Have you had tidings?

AL-HAFI.

I? Not I! I came  
Expecting to receive them.

SALADIN.

Pay to Sittah  
A thousand denarii.

[*Walks to and fro, lost in thought.*]

AL-HAFI.

Pay—not receive!  
That's good! A something rather less  
than naught.

To Sittah? Once again to Sittah?  
Lost?

And lost again at chess! There stands  
the game.

SITTAH.

You cannot grudge me my good for-  
tune?

AL-HAFI [*studying the game*].

Grudge?

If— But you know.

SITTAH [*motioning to him*].

Hush, Hafi, hush!

AL-HAFI [*still looking on the board*].

'Twere better  
You grudged yourself.

SITTAH.

Hush, Hafi!

AL-HAFI [*to Sittah*].

Yours the white?

You offer check?

SITTAH.

'Tis well he does not hear.

AL-HAFI.

The move is his?

SITTAH [*going nearer to him*].

Pray, say I may receive  
My money.

AL-HAFI [*still intent on the game*].

Yes; you shall receive the money,  
As you receive it always.

SITTAH.

Are you mad?

AL-HAFI.

The game's not over, Saladin—not lost.

SALADIN [*scarce attending*].

No matter! Pay!

AL-HAFI.

Pay—pay!—There stands your queen.

SALADIN.

She counts for naught; belongs not in  
the game.

SITTAH.

Make haste and say that I may fetch  
the money.

AL-HAFI [*still eager with the game*].

Of course; as usual—But suppose the  
queen

Be no more in the game you're not yet  
mated.

SALADIN [*approaches and overturns the  
board*].

I am; I will be.

AL-HAFI.

So! As played, so won!  
And as 'twas won, so 'twill be paid.

SALADIN [*to Sittah*].

What says he?

SITTAH [*occasionally signing to  
Al-Hafi*].

You know him; how he likes to make  
objections;  
To be entreated; sometimes will be jeal-  
ous.

SALADIN.

But not of you? Not of my sister?—  
Hafi,  
What hear I of you? Jealous?

AL-HAFI.

May be so.  
I would I had her mind; were good as  
she.

SITTAH.

Still, he has always paid me honestly;  
To-day, too, will he pay. Trust him.—  
Go, Hafi!  
I'll send and fetch the money.

AL-HAFI.

No; I play  
This farce with you no more. He must  
be told.

SALADIN.

Who? What?

SITTAH.

Al-Hafi, keep you thus your word?  
Is this your promise?

AL-HAFI.

How could I suppose

You'd carry it so far?

SALADIN.

Shall I learn naught?

SITTAH.

I pray you, Hafi, be discreet.

SALADIN.

'Tis strange!

Does Sittah pray so earnestly, so warmly  
A stranger's and a dervise's forbearance,  
Rather than mine, her brother's? I  
command,  
Al-Hafi! Dervise, speak!

SITTAH.

Let not a trifle  
Disturb you, brother, more than it de-  
serves.

You know that many times I've won  
from you

This same amount at chess; and since  
the money

To me was useless now, and Hafi's  
chest

Had none too much of it, I left it there.

But have no fear, for neither you, my  
brother,

Nor Hafi, nor the treasury, shall keep it.

AL-HAFI.

Ah, if that were all!

SITTAH.

There's more of the same.  
E'en that is in the treasury, untouched,  
That once you handed me yourself:  
some months  
Has it been lying there.

AL-HAFI.

E'en that's not all.

SALADIN.

Not all? Speak out, then!

AL-HAFI.

Since we've been expecting  
The gold from Egypt, she—

SITTAH [*to Saladin*].

Why listen to him?

AL-HAFI.

Not only drew no money, but—

SALADIN.

Advanced  
Her own?—not so!

AL-HAFI.

Supported the whole court.  
Herself alone defrayed your whole ex-  
pense.

SALADIN [*embracing her*].

My own true sister!

SITTAH.

Who but you, my brother,  
Had made me rich enough to do so  
much?

AL-HAFI.

And now is making her as poor, as beg-  
gared  
As he himself.

SALADIN.

I poor? Her brother poor?  
When had I more—when less? A cloak,  
a sword,  
A horse—and God! What need I more?  
In these,  
When can I want? Yet could I chide  
you, Hafi.

SITTAH.

Nay, chide not, brother. Could I but  
relieve  
Our father's needs as well!

SALADIN.

Ah, there you dash  
My happiness again. I, for myself,

Want nothing—cannot want. But he—  
he wants;  
And in him, want we all. What shall  
I do?

It may be long before the gold arrives  
From Egypt. Why so great delay, God  
knows.

All's quiet there. I will economize,  
Will save, submit to aught that but con-  
cerns

Myself, and brings no suffering on  
others.

But what avails it all? A horse, a  
cloak,  
A sword—these must I have; and with  
my God

There is no cheapening. Little enough  
it is

Contents him now—my heart. I counted  
much

Upon your treasury's overplus, Al-Hafi.

AL-HAFI.

My overplus? Confess yourself, em-  
paling,

Or strangling at the least, had been my  
doom,

If any overplus you'd caught me in.

A fraud, indeed, had been a safer ven-  
ture.

SALADIN.

What's to be done?—Was there, then,  
none but Sittah

To borrow of?

SITTAH.

Would I that privilege,  
My brother, have relinquished? Still I  
claim it.

Still not quite to the bottom am I  
drained.

SALADIN.

Not quite! That's worst of all.—Take  
instant measures;

Get gold of whom you can, and as you  
can;

Go, borrow—promise! Only borrow  
not

Of those made rich by me; such borrow-  
ing

Were asking back my gifts. Seek the  
most greedy:

They readiest lend to me; for they have  
learned

How in my hands their gold accumu-  
lates.

AL-HAFI.

I know none such.

SITTAH.

I just bethink me, Hafi,  
I heard your friend was back again.

AL-HAFI [*embarrassed*].

My friend?

Who may he be?

SITTAH.

That much-praised Jew of yours.

AL-HAFI.

A much-praised Jew—of mine?

SITTAH.

Endowed by God,—  
I well remember yet the words you used  
In speaking of him,—one endowed by  
God

In fullest measure with the least and  
greatest

Of all this world's possessions.

AL-HAFI.

Said I so?  
What could such words have meant?

SITTAH.

The least is riches;  
The greatest, wisdom.

AL-HAFI.

Of a Jew? What Jew  
Could words like those have fitted?

SITTAH.

Not your Nathan?

AL-HAFI.

Ah, Nathan—yes; I had not thought of him.

Is he indeed come back again at last?  
Things must have prospered with him  
then. 'Tis true,  
The people called him once the Wise—  
and Rich.

SITTAH.

Now more than ever call they him the Rich.

The city rings with stories of the jewels,  
The treasures he has brought.

AL-HAFI.

So then the Rich  
He is again, and soon will be the Wise.

SITTAH.

What say you to approaching him, Al-Hafi?

AL-HAFI.

For what? You do not mean to borrow? Ah,  
There you mistake him. Nathan lend!  
Therein  
Consists his wisdom, that he lends to none.

SITTAH.

Another picture of him once you drew.

AL-HAFI.

He'd lend you merchandise at need;  
but money,  
His money, never! Otherwise a Jew,  
Whose like is rarely found among his people.

He has intelligence, knows how to live,  
Is strong at chess. But he excels the rest

In evil as in good. Count not on him.

'Tis true, he gives the poor. A match  
he is

For Saladin, in giving. Not as much,  
Perhaps, but just as gladly—just as free  
From all distinction. Mussulman, Par-  
see,

The Christian, or the Jew, all one to him.

SITTAH.

And such a man—

SALADIN.

How can I ne'er have heard  
Of such a man till now!

SITTAH.

Would he not lend  
To Saladin—to Saladin, who spends  
For others only, not himself?

AL-HAFI.

There shows  
The Jew again—the ordinary Jew.  
My word for it, so envious he is,  
So jealous of your giving! No "God  
bless you!"

In all the world, but he'd have said to him.

He therefore lends to none, lest he  
should lose

The means of giving. Charity his law  
Commands, but it commands not cour-  
tesy;

And thus through charity is he become  
The most discourteous neighbor in the  
world.

'Tis true, we've not been on good terms  
of late;

But think me not for that unjust to him.  
In all else is he good, but not to lend:  
Trust me he'd not.—I'll knock at other  
doors.

I just bethink me of a Moor who's rich  
And miserly.—I go! I go!

SITTAH.

What haste,  
Al-Hafi?

SALADIN.

Let him go: nay, let him go!



## SCENE III.

SITTAH. SALADIN.

SITTAH.

He hurries off as he were glad to escape.  
What means it? Has he been himself  
deceived,  
Or would he mislead us?

SALADIN.

Why ask of me?

I hardly know of whom you spoke. This  
Nathan,  
This Jew of yours, I never heard his  
name  
Until to-day.

SITTAH.

How is it possible

You never heard of one of whom 'tis  
said

He has explored the graves of Solomon  
And David, and by certain magic words  
Can loose their seals? And further,  
that from them

He brings to light of day, from time to  
time,

That boundless wealth which speaks no  
lesser source.

SALADIN.

If 'tis from graves this man derives his  
wealth,

'Tis surely not from Solomon's or Da-  
vid's,

But from the graves of fools!

SITTAH.

Or knaves! Besides,

More yielding are the sources of his  
wealth

Than such a mammon-pit; exhaustless  
are they.

SALADIN.

He trades, you say.

SITTAH.

His beasts of burden toil

On every highway and through every  
desert;

In every harbor lie his ships. Al-Hafi  
So told me once, and rapturously added  
How generously, nobly would his  
friend

Employ the wealth he had not thought  
too mean

To labor for with hand and brain: he  
added,

How free from prejudice his spirit was,  
How open was his heart to every virtue,  
With all things beautiful in sympathy.

SALADIN.

Yet now Al-Hafi spoke so doubtfully,  
So coldly of him!

SITTAH.

Coldly?—no; embarrassed.

As deemed he it were dangerous to  
praise,

Yet would not censure undeservedly.

Or is it that the best among his people  
Can never quite escape the Jew; that  
here

Is Hafi disappointed in his friend?

But, be he what he may—more than a  
Jew

Or less—is he but rich, enough for us.

SALADIN.

You surely would not take his gold  
from him

By violence, dear sister!

SITTAH.

Violence?

What call you violence? by fire and  
sword?

No, no; against the weak what force is  
needed

Save their own weakness?—Come with  
me awhile

Into my harem; you must hear a singer

I bought me yesterday. Meanwhile a  
plan

I have for Nathan shall be ripening.  
Come!

## SCENE IV.

*Near the palms before NATHAN's house.  
RECHA and NATHAN come from the  
house. DAJA joins them.*

RECHA.

Why have you been so long in coming,  
father?  
You scarce will find him now.

NATHAN.

Well, well; if here  
No more, no longer 'neath these palms,  
yet elsewhere.  
Be tranquil. See, comes there not Daja  
to us?

RECHA.

She's lost him, I am sure.

NATHAN.

Perhaps not, Recha.

RECHA.

She'd come more quickly else.

NATHAN.

She may not see us.

RECHA.

She sees us now.

NATHAN.

And hurries forward. Look!  
Be calm—be quiet!

RECHA.

Would you want a child  
Who could be calm,—who could be un-  
concerned  
For one whose bravery was her life—  
the life  
She values only as it came from you?

NATHAN.

I would not have you other than you  
are;

Not though I read a something in your  
soul  
You will not name.

RECHA.

What, father?

NATHAN.

Do you ask—  
Ask me so timidly? Whate'er be stirred  
Within you, 'tis but innocence and na-  
ture.  
Fear not. I have no fear. But promise  
me—  
If e'er your heart declare itself more  
plainly,  
No wish of it shall be concealed from  
me.

RECHA.

You make me tremble but to think my  
heart  
Could ever wish concealment from my  
father.

NATHAN.

Enough; 'tis once for all agreed be-  
tween us.—  
See, here is Daja!—Well?

DAJA.

He's walking yet  
Beneath the palms, just hid by yonder  
wall.  
Look, there he is!

RECHA.

Ah, see! He hesitates.  
Will he go on or back, to right or left?

DAJA.

No, no; he's sure to take again the path  
Around the cloister, and must pass this  
way.

RECHA.

Right, right! Say, have you spoken  
with him to-day?  
How is he?

DAJA.

Just as always.

NATHAN.

Have a care  
He does not see you. Better further  
back;—  
Or safest in the house.

RECHA.

But one look more!  
Alas, the hedge that steals him from  
me!

DAJA.

Come!  
Your father's right. He might turn back  
at once,  
Should he behold you. Come!

RECHA.

Ah me, that hedge!

NATHAN.

And should he suddenly emerge from it,  
He could not fail to see you. Go, then  
—go!

DAJA.

Come, come with me; I'll take you to a  
window,  
Whence we may watch them unob-  
served. Come!

RECHA.

Yes?

[Both go into the house.]

SCENE V.

NATHAN. *Soon afterward the* TEMPLAR.

NATHAN.

I almost dread to meet this strange Un-  
known;  
I almost shrink before his rugged virtue.  
Strange that one man can make his fel-  
low-man  
Thus ill at ease!—Ah, there he comes.  
By heaven!  
A manly youth. That brave, defiant  
look,  
I like it well—that solid tread. The  
shell

Alone is bitter; surely not the kernel.  
Where have I seen one like him?—No-  
ble Frank,  
Forgive me—

TEMPLAR.

What?

NATHAN.

Permit me—

TEMPLAR.

What, Jew, what?

NATHAN.

That I presume to address you.

TEMPLAR.

Can I help it?

Be brief!

NATHAN.

Forgive, and hurry not so proudly,  
With such contempt, past one whom you  
have bound  
Unto yourself forever.

TEMPLAR.

How is that?

Ah, I can guess. You are—

NATHAN.

My name is Nathan  
I'm father of the maiden whom you  
saved  
So generously from the fire. I come—

TEMPLAR.

If 'tis to thank me, you may spare your-  
self.  
Too many thanks have I endured al-  
ready  
For such a trifle. Nothing do you owe  
me.  
How did I know the maiden was your  
daughter?  
It is the Templar's duty to assist

The first, the best whose need he sees.  
 Besides,  
 My life was at that moment hateful to  
 me.  
 I gladly seized the opportunity  
 To risk it for another—for another,  
 Though but a Jewess.

NATHAN.

It is nobly spoken—  
 Offensively and nobly. Yet I read  
 Your motive. Modest greatness shields  
 itself  
 Behind offensive words from admira-  
 tion.  
 But if it scorn the tribute of our praise,  
 Is there none other less contemptible?  
 Knight, were you not a prisoner here,  
 a stranger,  
 I should not be thus bold. Command  
 me—speak!  
 What service can be done you?

TEMPLAR.

None by you.

NATHAN.

Yet I am rich.

TEMPLAR.

To me the richest Jew  
 Was ne'er the best.

NATHAN.

Might you not still employ  
 That better which he has—employ his  
 wealth?

TEMPLAR.

Good; there I will not wholly say you  
 nay—  
 E'en for my mantle's sake. When this  
 be worn  
 To tatters, so that neither shred nor  
 stitch  
 Will hold together longer, I will come  
 And borrow cloth or money for a new  
 one.—  
 Look not so troubled. You are safe  
 a while.  
 'Tis not yet come to that. See, it is still

In tolerable condition. Only here  
 It has an ugly spot; this end was  
 scorched.  
 But lately did it happen, as I bore  
 Your daughter through the fire.

NATHAN [*taking hold of the corner and  
 looking at it.*]

Strange that a burn,  
 An ugly spot like that, should bear this  
 man  
 A better testimony than his lips!—  
 Might I but kiss it—kiss the spot! Ah,  
 pardon,  
 'Twas unawares.

TEMPLAR.

What?

NATHAN.

That a tear fell on it.

TEMPLAR.

No matter, it has had such drops before.  
 (I soon shall grow confused before this  
 Jew.)

NATHAN.

Might I request the further favor of  
 you,  
 That you would send your mantle to my  
 daughter?

TEMPLAR.

What would she with it?

NATHAN.

That her lips may press  
 The spot, since to embrace your knees,  
 in vain  
 Is her desire.

TEMPLAR.

But, Jew—your name is Nathan?  
 But, Nathan—you have spoken well, and  
 sharply.  
 I know not what to answer. Surely—I—

NATHAN.

Disguise yourself, dissemble as you will.  
Here too I've found you out. You were  
too good,

Too honorable to be more polite.

A girl, all sentiment—her waiting  
woman,

All eagerness to serve—her father ab-  
sent—

You cared for her good name; fled from  
her gaze—

Fled that you might not conquer. Fur-  
ther cause

For thanks.

TEMPLAR.

I must confess you know the motives  
That ought to be a Templar's.

NATHAN.

But a Templar's?

Ought only—and because his Order  
bids?

I know a good man's motives, and I  
know

Good men are everywhere.

TEMPLAR.

With no distinction?

NATHAN.

Distinguished by their color, form and  
dress.

TEMPLAR.

Not more or less in one place than an-  
other?

NATHAN.

All such distinctions are of small ac-  
count.

The great man everywhere needs ample  
space:

Too many, closely planted, dash them-  
selves

Against each other. Average ones,  
like us,

Stand everywhere in crowds. But let  
not one

Cast slurs upon the others. Knots and  
gnarls

Must live on friendly terms. One little  
peak

Must not take airs, as 'twere the only  
one

Not sprung from earth.

TEMPLAR.

Well said! But know you, Nathan,  
What people practiced first this casting  
slurs—

What people were the first to call them-  
selves

The chosen people? How if I—not  
hate,

Indeed—but cannot help despising them  
For all their pride,—a pride which has  
descended

To Mussulman and Christian,—that  
their God

Must be the one true God? You start  
to hear

Such words from me, a Christian and a  
Templar.

When, where, has this fanaticism of  
having

The better God, and forcing him as best  
On all the world, e'er showed itself in  
colors

More black than here and now? Who  
here and now

Feels not his eyes unsealed? But be  
he blind

Who will!—Forget what I have said,  
and leave me. [Going.]

NATHAN.

You know not how much closer you  
have drawn me.

We must, we must be friends! Despise  
my people

With all your heart. We neither chose  
our people.

Are we our people? What does "peo-  
ple" mean?

Is Jew or Christian rather Jew or  
Christian

Than man? May I have found in you  
another

Who is content to be esteemed a man!

TEMPLAR.

You have, by heaven, you have! Your hand! I blush  
That for a moment I should have misjudged you.

NATHAN.

And I am proud; for 'tis the vulgar only  
That rarely is misjudged.

TEMPLAR.

And but the rare  
That's not forgotten. Nathan, yes, we must,  
We must indeed be friends.

NATHAN.

Are so already.  
How Recha will rejoice! And ah, how bright  
The future opens to me! Only know her!

TEMPLAR.

I'm burning with impatience. Who is this  
Comes running from your house—is it not Daja?

NATHAN.

'Tis she—but why so troubled?

TEMPLAR.

Oh, may naught  
Have happened to our Recha!

SCENE VI.

*The preceding. DAJA enters hastily.*

DAJA.

Nathan, Nathan!

NATHAN.

Well?

DAJA.

Pardon me that I disturb you, knight.

NATHAN.

What is it?

TEMPLAR.

What?

DAJA.

The Sultan sent.  
The Sultan wants to see you. Oh, good heaven!  
The Sultan!

NATHAN.

Me?—the Sultan? He desires  
To see what novelties I've brought; but tell him  
That little—nothing has been yet unpacked.

DAJA.

Naught will he see; he wants to speak with you,  
With you in person, soon, as soon as may be.

NATHAN.

I come. Go, go!

DAJA.

Be not displeased, dread knight.  
We're so concerned to know the Sultan's pleasure!

NATHAN.

That will be known in time. Go, leave us now!

SCENE VII.

NATHAN and the TEMPLAR.

TEMPLAR.

Then know you him not personally yet?



NATHAN.

The Sultan? No. I've neither shunned  
nor sought him.  
The common fame spoke far too well  
of him  
For me not rather to believe than see.  
But now—though that be false, his  
saving of your life—

TEMPLAR.

Yes; that at least is true. I hold my  
life  
But as his gift.

NATHAN.

He granted me with that  
A double, threefold life. That changes  
all  
Between us; throws a sudden net about  
me  
Which binds me to his service ever-  
more.  
Scarce can I wait to learn his first  
commands.  
I am prepared for all; and will con-  
fess  
I am so for your sake.

TEMPLAR.

Oft as I've met him  
I've found no way to thank him yet  
myself.  
The impression that I made upon him  
came  
As suddenly as suddenly it passed.  
It may be he remembers me no more:  
Yet once at least he must remember  
me,  
To speak my final sentence. Not enough  
That I exist at his command; have life  
But by his will: he must decide whose  
will  
Shall guide my life.

NATHAN.

True: I will haste the more.  
Some word may furnish opportunity  
To speak of you. Permit me—pardon  
—I haste.  
When will you come to us?

TEMPLAR.

Whene'er I may.

NATHAN.

Whene'er you will.

TEMPLAR.

To-day, then.

NATHAN.

And your name,  
I pray you?

TEMPLAR.

Was—is Curd von Stauffen. Curd!

NATHAN.

Von Stauffen—Stauffen?

TEMPLAR.

Does the name surprise you?

NATHAN.

Von Stauffen? Many of that name  
have here—

TEMPLAR.

Oh yes; full many here have lived and  
died.  
My uncle—father—But why fix your  
eyes  
With such a growing eagerness upon  
me?

NATHAN.

Oh, nothing, nothing! Can I e'er be  
weary  
Of gazing on you?

TEMPLAR.

Then I leave you first.  
The seeker's eye not seldom has dis-  
covered  
More than the seeker wished. I dread  
it, Nathan.

Let time, not curiosity, cement  
Our friendship. [*He goes.*]

NATHAN.

Oft the seeker's eye discovers  
More than he wished.—He seemed to  
read my soul  
That might befall me here.—'Tis not  
alone  
Wolf's gait, Wolf's figure, but his  
voice as well.  
Exactly so would Wolf throw back his  
head;  
So carried Wolf his sword; so Wolf  
would shade  
His brow to hide the flashing of his  
eyes.  
How such deep-printed images will  
slumber  
Within us, till a word, a sound awakes  
them!  
Von Stauffen—that was it. Filneck  
and Stauffen.  
Of this I must know more, and pres-  
ently.  
But first to Saladin.—Who's listening  
there?  
Is it not Daja? Come, come nearer,  
Daja.

SCENE VIII.

DAJA. NATHAN.

NATHAN.

What is it? Ah, the weight on both  
your hearts  
Is not what Saladin would have with  
me.

DAJA.

You cannot blame her for it. At the  
moment  
Your converse with him grew more in-  
timate,  
The Sultan's message drove us from  
the window.

NATHAN.

Tell her she may expect him every mo-  
ment.

DAJA.

In truth?

NATHAN.

May I depend upon you, Daja?  
Be on your guard, I pray you. You will  
ne'er  
Have reason to repent it. E'en your  
conscience  
Will find account in it. Disturb me  
not  
In what I plan. In all you ask and tell,  
Use caution and reserve.

DAJA.

How can you think  
Of such a thing again! I go: go you!  
For see, there surely comes from Sa-  
ladin  
A second messenger—your dervise,  
Hafi. [*Goes.*]

SCENE IX.

NATHAN. AL-HAFI.

AL-HAFI.

Ha, ha! I'm just in search of you  
again.

NATHAN.

Is it so urgent? What's his will  
with me?

AL-HAFI.

Whose?

NATHAN.

Saladin's.—I come; I come.

AL-HAFI.

To whom?

To Saladin?

NATHAN.

Did Saladin not send you?

AL-HAFI.

No. Has he sent before?

NATHAN.

He has indeed.

AL-HAFI.

It is decided then.

NATHAN.

What? What's decided?

AL-HAFI.

That—I am not to blame; God knows  
I'm not.

What tales have I not told of you,  
what lies,  
To avert it?

NATHAN.

What to avert? What is decided?

AL-HAFI.

That you're his treasurer. I pity you.  
At least I'll not stay by to see. I go;  
I go this hour. You know already  
whither,

And know the way. Have you com-  
mands for me

Upon the road? Speak! I am at your  
service.

But order nothing more than can be  
carried

Upon a naked back. Speak quick! I'm  
off!

NATHAN.

Bethink yourself, Al-Hafi; pray, con-  
sider

That I know nothing vet. What means  
your talk?

AL-HAFI.

Best take the bags with you at once.

NATHAN.

The bags?

AL-HAFI.

The gold you're to advance to Saladin.

NATHAN.

So that is all?

AL-HAFI.

Shall I look on and see  
How he will drain your marrow day  
by day,

Down to the very toes; look on and  
see

How his extravagance will borrow,  
borrow,

And borrow from those barns ne'er  
emptied yet

By your wise charities, till the poor  
mouse

That had its birth there shall be  
starved to death?

Do you imagine he who needs your  
gold

Will take your counsel also? He take  
counsel!

Took Saladin e'er counsel? Hear what  
happened

When last I went to him.

NATHAN.

Well?

AL-HAFI.

I arrived  
When Sittah and himself had been at  
chess.

His sister plays not badly. There the  
game

That Saladin had given up for lost  
Was standing on the board. I glanced  
at it,

And saw that it was far from lost.

NATHAN.

Aha!  
A great discovery for you,

AL-HAFI.

His king  
But needed to advance upon the pawn  
Against her check. If I could only  
show you!

NATHAN.

I'll take your word for it.

AL-HAFI.

For so the rook  
Were brought into the field, and she  
were lost.  
All that I wished to show, and called  
him.—Think!

NATHAN.

He was not of your mind?

AL-HAFI.

He would not listen;  
Contemptuously overturned the board.

NATHAN.

Is't possible?

AL-HAFI.

And said he would be mated.  
He would be mated! Do you call that  
playing?

NATHAN.

Hardly indeed; 'tis playing with the  
game.

AL-HAFI.

And that for no mean stake.

NATHAN.

Gold here, gold there!  
That is the least. But not to listen to  
you  
Upon a point so weighty—not to listen,  
And not admire your eagle eye—that,  
that  
Cries out for vengeance—does it not?

AL-HAFI.

Nay, nay;  
I do but tell you this to show the  
man.  
I'm at the end of all my patience with  
him.  
Here must I run about 'mongst dirty  
Moors,  
And ask who'll lend him. I who for  
myself

Have never begged, must borrow now  
for others.

To borrow scarce is better than to beg;  
As lending, lending upon interest,  
Scarce better is than stealing. With  
my patrons  
Beside the Ganges have I need of  
neither.

And need not to become the tool of  
either.

Beside the Ganges only are there men.  
Here none but you is worthy of the  
life

Beside the Ganges. Will you come  
with me?

Leave all your trumpery at once for  
him,

And so have done with it. By small  
degrees

He'd have it out of you. Thus would  
the torment

At once be ended. I will get your  
delk.\*

Come, come!

NATHAN.

I've thought of that as a reserve.  
Yet I'll consider it, Al-Hafi. Wait—

AL-HAFI.

Consider it! No, no; 'tis not a matter  
To be considered.

NATHAN.

Only till I've seen  
The Sultan—only till I've said fare-  
well—

AL-HAFI.

He who considers does but seek excuse  
For lack of courage. Who cannot re-  
solve

Upon the instant for himself to live,  
Remains forevermore the slave of oth-  
ers.

Do as you will!—Farewell!—As you  
think best!

Here lies my road, there yours,

*\*The garb of a dervise.*

NATHAN.

Al-Hafi, stay!  
You'll settle your accounts before you go?

AL-HAFI.

Oh, pshaw! My property is not worth counting.  
And for my debts—why, Sittah or yourself  
Must be my bail. Farewell! [*Goes.*]

NATHAN.

I'll be your bail.  
Wild, noble, good—how shall I call him? Truly,  
The genuine beggar is the genuine king.

### ACT THIRD.

#### SCENE I.

*Room in Nathan's house.* RECHA. DAJA.

RECHA.

Tell me my father's words again, dear Daja.  
He said I might expect him every moment.  
Does it not sound as if he'd soon be here?  
And yet how many moments have gone by  
Since then! Ah well, who thinks of them, the past?  
I'll only live in every coming moment.  
The one that brings him must be here at last.

DAJA.

Oh that unlucky message from the Sultan!  
Else Nathan would have brought him in that instant.

RECHA.

And came he now, this instant; were the warmest,

The fondest of my wishes now fulfilled—  
What then—what then?

DAJA.

What then? Then should I hope  
My warmest wish might also be fulfilled.

RECHA.

What would supply the place within my breast,  
Which swells no longer, uninspired by one  
Supreme desire? What? Nothing!  
Ah, I tremble.

DAJA.

My wish shall take the place of yours fulfilled—  
To know you are in Europe, and in hands  
Deserving of you.

RECHA.

You're mistaken, Daja.  
The motive that inspires that wish in you  
Prevents it in myself. Your fatherland  
Allures you; and shall mine, shall mine  
not hold me?  
Shall images of home, unfaded yet  
Within your soul, have greater power  
than home,  
With all that I can see, and touch, and hear?

DAJA.

Resist with all your will—the ways of Heaven  
Are still the ways of Heaven. How if  
through him  
Who saved your life, his God for whom he fights  
Would lead you to the land and to the people  
For which your birth designed you?

RECHA.

Daja, Daja!  
What mean such words? What strange conceits you have!

"His God—for whom he fights!" Can God be owned?

What sort of God were he whom man could own—

Who needs defenders? How can any tell

The spot of earth for which his birth designed him,

If not the spot on which it placed him?

—Daja,

What if my father heard such words from you!

What has he done that you should all ways paint

My happiness so far removed from him?

What has he done that you desire to mix

The seeds of understanding he has sown

So pure within my soul, with weeds or flowers

From your own distant land? You know, dear Daja,

He'll none of your gay flowers upon my soil.

I, too, confess I feel my soil is weakened,

Exhausted by your flowers e'en though they grace it;

And in their sweet, intoxicating fragrance

I grow bewildered, giddy. You, dear Daja,

Are more accustomed to it. No reproach

Upon the stronger nerves that can endure it;

Only it suits not me.—Your angel now;—

My head was well-nigh turned with it. I blush

E'en now, before my father, at such nonsense.

DAJA.

Nonsense! As if here only there were sense!

If I might only speak!

RECHA.

And may you not?

When was I not all ear to hear you tell

Of Christian heroes often as you would?

When gave I not their deeds my admiration,

Their sufferings my tears? True, their belief

I never held their greatest heroism; But all the more consoling was the lesson

That faith in God depends not on the views

We entertain of Him. That has my father

So often told us; and yourself, dear Daja,

Have oft confirmed it. Why desire alone

To undermine what both have helped to build?—

But 'twere not well that we should meet our friend

With talk like this. And yet for me it is.

To me it matters infinitely whether—Hark, Daja! Comes not some one to the door?

If it were he! Hark, hark!

## SCENE II.

RECHA, DAJA, and the TEMPLAR, for whom the door is opened, with the words—"Be pleased to enter."

RECHA (*starts back, recovers herself, and is about to throw herself at his feet*).

'Tis he—'tis my preserver! Ah!

TEMPLAR.

Thus late I came to shun a scene like this; and yet—

RECHA.

Here at the feet of this proud man, once more

Will I give thanks to God,—not to the man.

The man desires no thanks,—desires as little



As does the water-bucket, kept so busy  
In putting out the flames. 'Twas filled  
and emptied

In total apathy. So with the man.  
Like that, he was but thrust into the  
fire;

By accident I fell into his arms;  
There lay by accident within his arms,  
E'en as a spark might lie upon his man-  
tle,

Till something—what I know not—  
threw us both

Beyond the flames. What cause for  
thanks in that?

Wine urges men to other deeds in  
Europe.—

'Twas but a Templar's duty. They,  
like dogs

Of somewhat higher training, have to  
fetch

From fire as well as water.

TEMPLAR (*who has been gazing on her  
with surprise and disquiet*).

Daja, Daja!

If moments of distress and bitterness  
Had made me harsh with you, why  
bring to her

Each foolish word that might escape  
my lips?

'Twas taking a too cruel vengeance,  
Daja.

Henceforth I hope for kindlier inter-  
cession.

DAJA.

Scarce think I, knight, these little  
stings of yours,

Flung at her heart, have harmed your  
cause with her.

RECHA.

Had you a grief, and were you of your  
grief

Less generous than of life?

TEMPLAR.

Kind, gracious maiden!

How is my soul divided betwixt eye  
And ear! Not this the maiden that I  
saved—

It cannot, cannot be; for who had  
known her

And not have saved her? who would  
wait for me?

'Tis true—that fear—deforms.

[*He pauses, lost in contemplation of  
her.*]

RECHA.

Yet I find you

To be the same.

[*Another pause, until, to rouse him  
from his abstraction, she continues.*]

But you must tell us, knight,  
Where you have been so long. I al-  
most might

Ask, too, where you are now?

TEMPLAR.

I am—where I  
Perhaps ought not to be.

RECHA.

And where have been?  
Also, perhaps, where you should not  
have been?  
That is not well.

TEMPLAR.

On—on—which is the mountain?  
On Sinai.

RECHA.

Sinai? Ah, I'm glad; for now  
Can I learn surely if 'tis true—

TEMPLAR.

What—what?  
If it be true that there the spot is  
shown  
Where in God's presence Moses stood,  
when—

RECHA.

No;  
Not that. Where'er he stood, 'twas in  
God's presence.  
Besides, I know enough of that al-  
ready.

I only wanted you to tell me if—  
 If it were true there's much less weariness  
 In climbing up that mountain than descending.  
 With all the mountains I have ever climbed  
 'Twas just the contrary.—Well, knight,  
 how now?  
 You turn away—you will not look at me!

TEMPLAR.

I would the better hear you.

RECHA.

You would hide  
 Your smiles at my simplicity,—your smiles  
 That no more worthy question can I ask  
 About that holy mountain,—would you not?

TEMPLAR.

Then must I look again into your eyes.  
 Ah, now you cast them down—conceal your smiles!  
 When I would read in features full of riddles  
 What I distinctly hear, will you disguise them?  
 Ah, Recha, truly said he, "Only know her!"

RECHA.

Who said—of whom—to you?

TEMPLAR.

Your father's words  
 To me in speaking of you—"Only know her!"

DAJA.

Did I not say it? Did not also I?

TEMPLAR.

But where is he, your father? Stays he yet  
 With Saladin?

RECHA.

No doubt.

TEMPLAR.

So long? Ah no!  
 Forgetful that I am! he's there no longer;  
 But by the convent yonder waits for me.  
 So, I am sure, it was agreed between us.  
 Permit me, I will go, will bring him.

DAJA.

Nay;  
 Leave that to me. Stay, stay, knight!  
 I will bring him  
 Without delay.

TEMPLAR.

Not so, not so. Myself,  
 Not you, is he expecting. And, besides,  
 He may—who knows?—he may with Saladin—  
 You do not know the Sultan!—may perchance  
 Have met with difficulties. There is danger,  
 Believe me, there is danger if I stay.

RECHA.

What danger?

TEMPLAR.

Danger to myself, to you,  
 To him, unless I quickly, quickly go.  
 [Goes.]

SCENE III.

RECHA and DAJA.

RECHA.

What means it, Daja? Why so quick to leave us?  
 What sudden thought could thus have urged him off?

DAJA.

Let be—let be. I hold it no bad sign.

RECHA.

A sign—of what?

DAJA.

Something's astir within:  
'Tis boiling, and must not be let boil  
over.

Let him alone. 'Tis your turn now.

RECHA.

My turn?  
You're unintelligible, like himself.

DAJA.

Soon the disquietude he made you suffer

You can requite him. Only, show  
yourself

Not too severe, too unrelenting to-  
wards him.

RECHA.

Whereof you speak, you must know  
best yourself.

DAJA.

So calm again?

RECHA.

I am; indeed I am.

DAJA.

Confess at least that his disquietude  
Rejoices you, and that to it you owe  
Whate'er you have of calm.

RECHA.

Not consciously.

The most I could confess would be my  
wonder

That suddenly the storm within my  
heart

Should be succeeded by so deep a still-  
ness.  
His whole appearance, conversation,  
bearing—

DAJA.

So soon have satisfied?

RECHA.

Not satisfied.  
No; far from that—

DAJA.

But still your hungry longing?

RECHA.

If you will have it so.

DAJA.

Not I indeed.

RECHA.

He will be always dear to me, far  
dearer

Than life itself; though at his name  
my pulse

No longer varies, and my heart no  
longer

Beats harder, faster when I think of  
him.—

What nonsense am I talking? Come,  
dear Daja,

We'll seek again the window toward  
the palms.

DAJA.

'Tis not then wholly stilled, that hun-  
gry longing.

RECHA.

Once more shall I behold the palms  
again;

Not only him beneath.

DAJA.

This coldness then  
Portends new fever.

RECHA.

Coldness? I'm not cold.  
With equal pleasure do I look, though  
calmly.

SCENE IV.

*Audience hall in Saladin's palace.*

SALADIN. SITTAH.

SALADIN (*speaking to some one with-  
out as he enters*).

Admit the Jew the moment he arrives.  
He's not disposed to hurry, it would  
seem.

SITTAH.

He was not there perhaps, in instant  
reach.

SALADIN.

O sister, sister!

SITTAH.

One would say a battle  
Were threatening you.

SALADIN.

One to be waged with weapons  
I never learned to use. I must dissem-  
ble;  
I must lay snares; must be upon my  
guard;  
Must walk on ice. When could I ever  
that?  
Where learned I ever that? And all  
for what—  
For what? To fish for money—all for  
money!  
To frighten money from a Jew—for  
money!  
To such mean shifts am I reduced at  
last  
To get the least of trifles!

SITTAH.

Every trifle,

Unduly scorned, will be revenged, dear  
brother.

SALADIN.

Alas, too true. But now suppose this  
Jew  
Should be the wise good man the der-  
vise once  
Described him.

SITTAH.

If he should! Where lies the harm?  
The usurious, careful, timid Jew alone  
The snare is laid for—not the wise,  
good man.  
He without snares were ours. What  
joy to hear  
How such a man would extricate him-  
self!  
The downright force that would the  
meshes break,  
Or crafty cunning that would disentangle—  
This pleasure will be all to boot.

SALADIN.

That's true.

It were a joy, indeed.

SITTAH.

There can arise  
Naught further to disturb you. Is he  
one  
Of many—just a Jew like any Jew?  
To such a one why be ashamed to seem  
What he believes all men to be? Nay,  
more;  
Who should appear aught other, were to  
him  
A fool, a dolt.

SALADIN.

I must act meanly, therefore,  
Lest I be meanly thought of by the  
mean.

SITTAH.

If mean you call it, dealing with each  
thing  
According to its nature.

SALADIN.

What contrivance  
Of woman's brain will she not palliate!

SITTAH.

Not palliate?

SALADIN.

My clumsy hands, I fear,  
Will break this keen and subtle thing.  
It needs  
To be conducted as 'twas first conceived,  
With all dexterity and cunning. Well,  
I can but try! I'll dance as best I may:  
And yet would rather it were worse than better.

SITTAH.

Trust not yourself too little. Do but will!  
I'll answer for you. See how men like you  
Delight to make us think that with the sword,  
The sword alone, you have achieved so much!  
The lion is ashamed, if with the fox  
He've hunted—of the fox, not of the craft.

SALADIN.

And how you women like to bring men down  
To your own level! Go, go; leave me now;  
I know my lesson.

SITTAH.

Leave you—must I go?

SALADIN.

You had not thought to stay?

SITTAH.

If not to stay—  
Not in your sight—yet in the adjoining room.

SALADIN.

That you may listen? If I'm to succeed,  
That neither, sister.—Go! the curtain stirs.  
He comes!—Remain not near; I'll see to it.

*[As she leaves by one door, Nathan enters by another, and Saladin seats himself.]*

SCENE V.

SALADIN and NATHAN.

SALADIN.

Come nearer, Jew, come nearer!—without fear!

NATHAN.

'Tis for your foes to fear!

SALADIN.

Your name is Nathan?

NATHAN.

'Yes.

SALADIN.

The wise Nathan?

NATHAN.

No.

SALADIN.

Ah! well, you may  
Not call yourself so, but the people do.

NATHAN.

May be. The people!

SALADIN.

Think you I despise  
The people's voice? Long have I  
wished to know  
The man they call the wise.

NATHAN.

If but in jest  
They call him so; if to the people's thought  
The wise is but the prudent, and the prudent  
But he who understands his own advantage?

SALADIN.

His true advantage mean you?

NATHAN.

Then indeed  
The selfish were the wise; then wise  
and prudent  
Would be indeed the same.

SALADIN.

I hear you prove  
What you would fain deny. Man's true  
advantage,  
Mistaken by the people, is known to  
you;  
Or has been sought by you; has been  
the theme  
Of your reflections; that alone makes  
wise.

NATHAN.

Which every man esteems himself to be.

SALADIN.

Enough of modesty; it nauseates  
To hear but that, when we expect dry  
reason.

[Starts up.]

Let us to business. But be honest,  
Jew,—  
Be honest!

NATHAN.

Sultan, I will surely serve you,  
In manner to deserve your further cus-  
tom.

SALADIN.

How serve me?

NATHAN.

You shall have the best of goods,  
And at the lowest price.

SALADIN.

What speak you of—  
Your merchandise? My sister presently  
Will do the chaffering with you. (That  
for her,  
The listener!) I've no business with  
the merchant.

NATHAN.

Then must you wish to learn what on  
my way  
I may have seen, encountered of the  
foe,  
Who is astir again; if openly—

SALADIN.

Nor yet is that my present business with  
you.  
Of that I know already all I need.—  
In short—

NATHAN.

Command me, Sultan.

SALADIN.

I desire  
Instruction of you in another matter—  
In quite another.—Since so great your  
wisdom,  
I pray you tell me what belief, what  
law  
Has most commended itself to you.

NATHAN.

Sultan,

I am a Jew.

SALADIN.

And I a Mussulman.  
Between us is the Christian. Now, but  
one  
Of all these three religions can be true.  
A man like you stands not where acci-  
dent  
Of birth has cast him. If he so re-  
main,  
It is from judgment, reasons, choice of  
best.  
Impart to me your judgment; let me  
hear  
The reasons I've no time to seek myself.  
Communicate, in confidence, of course,  
The choice you have arrived at through  
those reasons,  
That I may make it mine.—You are  
surprised—  
You weigh me with your glance!—May  
be that Sultan  
Had ne'er such whim before; which yet  
I deem  
Not unbecoming in a Sultan. Speak—



Your answer! Or a moment would you have  
To think upon it? Good; I grant it you,  
(Can she be listening? I'll surprise her then,  
And learn if I've done well.) But quick,  
be quick  
With your reflections. I'll not tarry long.

[*Goes into the adjoining room, as Sit-tah had done.*]

## SCENE VI.

NATHAN (*alone*).

Hm!—extraordinary—what a dilemma!  
What will the Sultan have? I am prepared  
For money, and he asks for truth—for truth!  
And wants it hard and bare, as truth were coin.  
Yes; if an ancient coin which went by weight,  
I grant you; but this coinage of to-day  
That's counted down, and has no other value  
Except the stamp upon it;—that she's not.  
Can truth be swept into the head like gold  
Into a sack? Which here is most the Jew—  
Is't I or he?—But stay; what if the Sultan  
Were not in earnest in his search for truth?  
Nay; the suspicion he could use the truth  
But for a snare, would be too mean.  
Too mean?  
Is aught too mean for princes?—Surely, surely.  
With what abruptness made he his attack!  
One knocks and listens, if one comes as friend.—  
I'll be upon my guard with him. But how?  
To play the bigot Jew avails not here:  
Still less no Jew at all. For if no Jew,

Well might he ask, why not a Mussulman?—  
I have it,—that will save me; for with fables  
Not children only can be entertained.  
He comes; well, let him come!

## SCENE VII.

SALADIN and NATHAN.

SALADIN.

(The coast is clear.)  
I'm not returned too soon for you, I hope;  
You've brought your meditations to a close?  
Speak them; no soul can hear us.

NATHAN.

I am willing  
The world should hear us.

SALADIN.

Nathan is so sure  
Of his good cause? Ah, that I call a sage;  
Never to hide the truth; to stake on it  
Your all; your soul and body, goods  
and life.

NATHAN.

When necessary it shall be, and useful.

SALADIN.

With right I hope henceforth to bear  
my title,  
Reformer of the world and of the law.

NATHAN.

A noble title certainly. Yet, Sultan,  
Ere I bestow my perfect confidence,  
Permit me to relate a story to you.

SALADIN.

Why not? I ever have been fond of  
stories  
Well told.

NATHAN.

The telling well I do not promise.

SALADIN.

Again so proudly modest!—Come, your story!

NATHAN.

In gray antiquity there lived a man  
In Eastern lands, who had received a  
ring  
Of priceless worth from a beloved  
hand.  
Its stone, an opal, flashed a hundred  
colors,  
And had the secret power of giving  
favor,  
In sight of God and man, to him who  
wore it  
With a believing heart. What wonder  
then  
This Eastern man would never put the  
ring  
Off from his finger, and should so pro-  
vide  
That to his house it be preserved for-  
ever?  
Such was the case. Unto the best-be-  
loved  
Among his sons he left the ring, en-  
joining  
That he in turn bequeath it to the son  
Who should be dearest; and the dearest  
ever,  
In virtue of the ring, without regard  
To birth, be of the house the prince and  
head.  
You understand me, Sultan?

SALADIN.

Yes; go on!

NATHAN.

From son to son the ring descending,  
came  
To one, the sire of three; of whom all  
three  
Were equally obedient; whom all three  
He therefore must with equal love re-  
gard.

And yet from time to time now this,  
now that,  
And now the third,—as each alone was  
by,  
The others not dividing his fond  
heart,—  
Appeared to him the worthiest of the  
ring;  
Which then, with loving weakness, he  
would promise  
To each in turn. Thus it continued  
long.  
But he must die; and then the loving  
father  
Was sore perplexed. It grieved him  
thus to wound  
Two faithful sons who trusted in his  
word;  
But what to do? In secrecy he calls  
An artist to him, and commands of him  
Two other rings, the pattern of his  
own.  
The artist's skill succeeds. He brings  
the rings,  
And e'en the father cannot tell his own.  
Relieved and joyful, summons he his  
sons,  
Each by himself; to each one by him-  
self  
He gives his blessing, and his ring—  
and dies.—  
You listen, Sultan?

SALADIN [*who, somewhat perplexed,  
has turned away.*]

Yes; I hear, I hear.

But bring your story to an end.

NATHAN.

'Tis ended;  
For what remains would tell itself. The  
father  
Was scarcely dead, when each brings  
forth his ring,  
And claims the headship. Questioning  
ensues,  
Strife, and appeal to law; but all in  
vain.  
The genuine ring was not to be dis-  
tinguished;—

[*After a pause, in which he awaits the  
Sultan's answer.*]

As undistinguishable as with us  
The true religion.

SALADIN.

That your answer to me?

NATHAN.

But my apology for not presuming  
Between the rings to judge, which, with  
design,  
The father ordered undistinguishable.

SALADIN.

The rings?—You trifle with me. The  
religions  
I named to you are plain to be dis-  
tinguished—  
E'en in the dress, e'en in the food and  
drink.

NATHAN.

In all except the grounds on which they  
rest.  
Are they not founded all on history,  
Traditional or written? History  
Can be accepted only upon trust.  
Whom now are we the least inclined to  
doubt?  
Not our own people—our own blood;  
not those  
Who from our childhood up have  
proved their love;  
Ne'er disappointed, save when disap-  
pointment  
Was wholesome to us? Shall my an-  
cestors  
Receive less faith from me, than yours  
from you?  
Reverse it: Can I ask you to belie  
Your fathers, and transfer your faith  
to mine?  
Or yet, again, holds not the same with  
Christians?

SALADIN.

(By heaven, the man is right! I've  
naught to answer.)

NATHAN.

Return we to our rings. As I have  
said,  
The sons appealed to law, and each took  
oath

Before the judge that from his father's  
hand  
He had the ring,—as was indeed the  
truth;  
And had received his promise long be-  
fore,  
One day the ring, with all its privi-  
leges,  
Should be his own,—as was not less the  
truth.  
The father could not have been false  
to him,  
Each one maintained; and rather than  
allow  
Upon the memory of so dear a father  
Such stain to rest, he must against his  
brothers,  
Though gladly he would nothing but the  
best  
Believe of them, bring charge of treach-  
ery;  
Means would he find the traitors to  
expose,  
And be revenged on them.

SALADIN.

And now the judge?  
I long to hear what words you give the  
judge.  
Go on!

NATHAN.

Thus spoke the judge: Produce your  
father  
At once before me, else from my tri-  
bunal  
Do I dismiss you. Think you I am  
here  
To guess your riddles? Either would  
you wait  
Until the genuine ring shall speak?—  
But hold!  
A magic power in the true ring resides,  
As I am told, to make its wearer  
loved—  
Pleasing to God and man. Let that  
decide.  
For in the false can no such virtue lie.  
Which one among you, then, do two  
love best?  
Speak! Are you silent? Work the  
rings but backward,  
Not outward? Loves each one himself  
the best?

Then cheated cheats are all of you! The  
rings  
All three are false. The genuine ring  
was lost;  
And to conceal, supply the loss, the  
father  
Made three in place of one.

SALADIN.

Oh, excellent!

NATHAN.

Go, therefore, said the judge, unless my  
counsel  
You'd have in place of sentence. It  
were this:

Accept the case exactly as it stands.  
Had each his ring directly from his  
father,

Let each believe his own is genuine.  
'Tis possible your father would no  
longer

His house to one ring's tyranny subject;  
And certain that all three of you he  
loved,

Loved equally, since two he would not  
humble,

That one might be exalted. Let each  
one

To his unbought, impartial love aspire;  
Each with the others vie to bring to  
light

The virtue of the stone within his ring;

Let gentleness, a hearty love of peace,

Beneficence, and perfect trust in God,

Come to its help. Then if the jewel's  
power

Among your children's children be re-  
vealed,

I bid you in a thousand thousand years  
Again before this bar. A wiser man

Than I shall occupy this seat and speak.

Go!—Thus the modest judge dismissed  
them.

SALADIN.

God!

NATHAN.

If therefore, Saladin, you feel yourself  
That promised, wiser man—

SALADIN (*rushing to him, and seizing  
his hand, which he holds to the end*).

I? Dust!—I? Naught!

O God!

NATHAN.

What moves you, Sultan?

SALADIN.

Nathan, Nathan!

Not ended are the thousand thousand  
years

Your judge foretold; not mine to claim  
his seat.

Go, go!—But be my friend.

NATHAN.

No further orders  
Has Saladin for me?

SALADIN.

None.

NATHAN.

None?

SALADIN.

No, none.

Why ask?

NATHAN.

An opportunity I sought  
To proffer a request.

SALADIN.

Needs a request  
An opportunity? Speak!

NATHAN.

I'm returned  
From distant journeyings to collect my  
debts.

Of ready money I've too much on hand.  
Times grow again uncertain. Scarce  
I know

Where safely to dispose it; and I  
thought

That you, perhaps, since more is always  
needed  
For an approaching war, might mine  
employ.

SALADIN (*fixing his eyes upon him*).

I will not ask you, Nathan, if Al-Hafi  
Has been already with you;—will not  
ask  
If no suspicion prompts this willing  
offer—

Suspicion? NATHAN.

SALADIN.

I deserve it;—but forgive me!  
Why seek to hide it? Frankly, 'twas  
my purpose—

NATHAN.

To ask the same of me?

SALADIN.

It was indeed.

NATHAN.

Then can we both be served. This  
Templar only  
Prevents my sending you my whole  
supply.  
You know the Templar. I've a heavy  
debt  
That first must be discharged to him.

SALADIN.

A Templar?

You surely do not with your gold sup-  
port  
My bitterest foes?

NATHAN.

I speak but of the one  
Whose life you spared.

SALADIN.

What bring you to my mind!  
The youth I'd utterly forgot. You know  
him?  
Where is he?

NATHAN.

Know you not how much your grace  
Has flowed through him on me? His  
new-found life  
He risked to save my daughter from  
the fire.

SALADIN.

Ah, did he so? He looked like such  
an one.  
So had my brother done, whom he re-  
sembles.  
Is he still here? Conduct him hither  
to me.  
So often have I spoken to my sister  
Of this her brother whom she never  
knew,  
She must behold his image.—Go, go find  
him!  
From one good deed, though born of  
naught but passion,  
How many other noble deeds will  
spring!  
Go, find him!

NATHAN.

Instantly!—it stands agreed  
About the other. [*Goes.*]

SALADIN.

Ah, why let I not  
My sister listen? To her, to her now!  
How shall I ever tell her of it all?

[*Goes out in the opposite direction.*]

SCENE VIII.

*Grove of palms near the Convent, where  
the TEMPLAR awaits NATHAN.*

TEMPLAR (*walking to and fro in conflict  
with himself, till he thus breaks  
forth*).

Here must the weary victim cease his  
struggles.—

So be it then! I will not, must not  
look

Into my heart more closely, nor fore-  
cast

The future for it. Enough that flight  
was useless,

Useless. And yet I could do nothing more  
 Than fly.—Now come what must!—Too suddenly  
 To be evaded fell at last the blow  
 That oft and long I had refused to meet.—  
 To see her, her I had so little wish  
 To see; to see her, and resolve my eyes  
 Should never let her go—Resolve?  
 Resolve  
 Is purpose, action. I was simply passive.  
 To see her, and to feel my very being  
 Was linked with hers, bound up in hers forever,  
 Was instantaneous. Life apart from her  
 Is inconceivable to me—were death;  
 And wheresoe'er we may be after death,  
 There too were death. If that be love,  
 then—then—  
 The Templar loves—the Christian loves the Jewess.  
 What matter? Many a prejudice already  
 Have I discarded in the Holy Land—  
 Holy to me forever for that cause.  
 What will my Order further? I, the Templar,  
 Am dead. The moment I became the prisoner  
 Of Saladin, I died unto my Order.  
 This head the Sultan gave,—is it my old one?  
 Nay, 'tis a new one—one that has no knowledge  
 Of the traditions by which that was fettered.  
 A better too; and better calculated  
 To breathe my native air. That can I feel;  
 For it is giving me the very thoughts  
 My father must have cherished here before me,  
 Unless I've been imposed upon with fables.  
 Yet wherefore fables? Credible enough;  
 And never to my mind more credible  
 Than now, in danger as I am of stumbling  
 Where he has fallen.—Fallen? I will choose

Rather to fall with men than stand with children.  
 His approbation is secured to me  
 By his example; and whose approbation  
 Could I desire besides? If Nathan's—  
 Ah,  
 Still less can his encouragement be wanting—  
 More dear than approbation.—What a Jew!—  
 Yet one who chooses to be thought a Jew,  
 And nothing better.—Here he comes in haste,  
 And glowing with delight, like all who come  
 From Saladin. Ho, Nathan!

## SCENE IX.

NATHAN *and the* TEMPLAR.

NATHAN.

Is it you?

TEMPLAR.

You tarried long with Saladin.

NATHAN.

Less long  
 Than you imagine. I was much delayed  
 In my departure. Truly, truly, Curd,  
 The man is equal to his fame; his fame  
 Is but his shadow. I must tell you first  
 And quickly—

TEMPLAR.

What?

NATHAN.

He will have speech with you;  
 Without delay he bids you to his presence.  
 First to my house with me, where his affairs  
 Demand my presence; then we'll go together.



TEMPLAR.

Your house I ne'er again will enter,  
Nathan,  
Till—

NATHAN.

Have you been already—spoken with  
her?  
Say, how does Recha please you?

TEMPLAR.

Past expression!  
But never—never will I see her more!  
Else must you promise it may be for-  
ever.

NATHAN.

How must I understand your words?

TEMPLAR (*after a pause, suddenly  
throwing himself on Nathan's neck*).

My father!

NATHAN.

Young man!

TEMPLAR (*starting back from him as  
suddenly*).

Not son?—I pray you, Nathan!—

NATHAN.

Friend!

TEMPLAR.

Not son?—I pray you, Nathan!—I con-  
jure you—

By Nature's earliest ties! Let later  
bonds

Not take precedence of them! Be con-  
tent

To be a man! Reject me not!

NATHAN.

Dear friend!

TEMPLAR.

And son?—not son?—Not e'en if grati-  
tude

Have in your daughter's heart prepared  
the way

For love—if both were waiting but your  
sign  
To melt into each other!—You are si-  
lent?

NATHAN.

You take me by surprise, young knight.

TEMPLAR.

Surprise?

Surprise you with your own sugges-  
tions, Nathan?

Sound they then unfamiliar from my  
lips?

How take you by surprise?

NATHAN.

Ere I e'en know

What Stauffen was your father?

TEMPLAR.

Nathan, Nathan!

At such a moment have you no emo-  
tion

Save curiosity?

NATHAN.

For in the past

A Stauffen well I knew: his name was  
Conrad.

TEMPLAR.

If 'twere my father's name?

NATHAN.

Was it indeed?

TEMPLAR.

I bear my father's name, Curd. Curd  
is Conrad.

NATHAN.

My Conrad, though, could not have  
been your father;

For he was like yourself—he was a  
Templar;

Ne'er married.

TEMPLAR.

Such a reason!

NATHAN.

What?

TEMPLAR.

For that

He might have been my father.

NATHAN.

You are jesting.

TEMPLAR.

And you are much too serious. Where's the harm?

A bit of bastard; a bar sinister;

A mark it is, no wise to be despised.—

But leave my ancestors unquestioned, Nathan;

So shall your own go free. No faintest doubt

I mean to cast upon your pedigree.

No; God forbid! You trace it, branch by branch,

As high as Abraham; and from him still up.

I know it well myself—could swear to it.

NATHAN.

You're bitter, but have I deserved it from you?

Have I yet aught refused? I would not hold you

Upon the instant to your word. No more.

TEMPLAR.

No more? Ah, then forgive!

NATHAN.

Come, come with me.

TEMPLAR.

And whither?—to your house? No, no; not there—

Not there!—it burns me! I will wait you here.

Go.—If I am to look on her again,

'Twill be to gaze my fill; if not—too much

Already have I seen her.

NATHAN.

I will haste.

SCENE X.

THE TEMPLAR; *soon afterwards* DAJA.

TEMPLAR.

More than enough!—how infinitely much

Man's brain will hold, and yet at times grows full

So suddenly,—so suddenly grows full With naught!—Vain, vain—be it filled with what it may!—

But patience! Soon upon this swollen mass

The soul will work, and space be cleared, and light

And order reign again.—Have I ne'er loved

Before? Was that not love, that love I deemed?

Can only this be love?

DAJA (*approaching stealthily*).

Knight! Knight!

TEMPLAR.

Who calls?

You, Daja?

DAJA.

Unperceived by him, I passed; Yet where you stand might he detect

us. Come, Come nearer me. This tree shall be our screen.

TEMPLAR.

What is it? why so secret?

DAJA.

'Tis a secret

That brings me to you; ay, a double secret;

One known but to myself—one lent to you.

What say you to exchanging? Give me yours,

And mine will I confide to you.

TEMPLAR.

Right gladly,  
When first I know what you consider  
mine.  
That doubtless shall I learn from  
yours. Begin!

DAJA.

Excuse me. No, Sir Knight, you first;  
I follow.  
Be sure my secret will avail you  
naught,  
Have I not first your own. Quick,  
therefore, quick!  
Wait till I draw it from you, you will  
then  
Have not confided; mine is still mine  
own,  
While yours is gone.—Poor Knight!  
that men should think  
Such secrets can be hidden from a  
woman!

TEMPLAR.

Which oft we're quite unconscious of  
possessing.

DAJA.

'Tis possible. Then will I kindly first  
Acquaint you with your own. What  
meant it, Knight,  
That with such headlong haste but now  
you fled;  
That you so left us wondering; that  
with Nathan  
You joined us not again? Made Recha,  
then,  
So slight impression, or so great? So  
great!  
So great! The flutterings of the poor  
charmed bird  
You make me know, that's fastened to  
the perch.  
Come, own you love her—love her e'en  
to madness,  
And I will tell you—

TEMPLAR.

Madness? Truly, there  
You speak of what you know.

DAJA.

Own then the love;  
I yield the madness.

TEMPLAR.

For it tells itself?  
A Templar loves a Jewess!

DAJA.

Little enough  
Of reason seems there in it; yet have  
things  
Ofttimes a deeper reason than we  
think.  
No new thing were it that unto him-  
self  
The Saviour should conduct us upon  
ways  
The wise would scarce have chosen.

TEMPLAR.

You are solemn.  
(Yet if for Saviour read I Providence,  
Is she not right?) My curiosity  
Is stirred beyond its wont.

DAJA.

This is the land  
Of wonders.

TEMPLAR.

(Of the wonderful indeed.  
Could it be otherwise—since here the  
world  
Is met together?) Take for granted.  
Daja,  
Whatever you desire; say that I love  
her;  
I cannot think of life without her;  
that—

DAJA.

In truth? Then swear to make her  
yours, to save her,  
For time and for eternity to save her.

TEMPLAR.

How so— how can I do so? Can I  
then swear  
What lies not in my power?

DAJA.

'Tis in your power.  
One word of mine shall put it in your  
power.

TEMPLAR.

That e'en her father shall have naught  
against it?

DAJA.

Why father? Father! Ah, he must  
consent.

TEMPLAR.

Must, Daja? Has he fallen among  
thieves?  
There is no must.

DAJA.

Well, well; he must be willing—  
He must be glad at last.

TEMPLAR.

He must—and glad?  
If I should tell you, Daja, 'tis a chord  
I've struck already!

DAJA.

And he chimed not in?

TEMPLAR.

He answered with a discord that of-  
fended.

DAJA.

What say you? At the shadow of a  
wish  
You showed for Recha, leaped he not  
for joy,  
But drew with coldness back, raised  
difficulties?

TEMPLAR.

"Twas nearly so.

DAJA.

Then not a moment more  
I hesitate.

TEMPLAR.

Yet still you hesitate?

DAJA.

So good he is in all besides! my debt  
To him so great! Oh that he would  
but hear!  
God knows my heart is bleeding thus  
to force him.

TEMPLAR.

I pray you keep me not in this sus-  
pense!  
Yet if yourself uncertain whether good  
Or evil, culpable or laudable  
Your purpose, speak not. I'll forget  
there's aught  
To be concealed.

DAJA.

That spurs me on, checks not.  
Know then that Recha is no Jewish  
maiden;  
She is—a Christian.

TEMPLAR (*coldly*).

I congratulate you.  
Found you the labor hard? Let not  
the throes  
Dismay you! Still continue zealously  
To people heaven, since you can naught  
for earth.

DAJA.

How, Knight! Deserves my confidence  
your scorn?  
Care you—you, Christian, Templar,  
 Lover too—  
Care you so little Recha is a Christian?

TEMPLAR.

Especially a Christian of your making!

DAJA.

You take me so? No wonder then!  
 Not so;  
 I'd like to see who could convert her!  
 No!  
 It is her happiness to have been long  
 What she has been prevented from  
 becoming.

TEMPLAR.

Tell all, or go!

DAJA.

She is a Christian child:  
 Of Christian parents born; baptized—

TEMPLAR. (*hastily*).

And Nathan?

DAJA.

Is not her father!

TEMPLAR.

Nathan not her father!  
 Know you what you are saying?

DAJA.

The truth which oft  
 Has cost me tears of blood.—He's not  
 her father!

TEMPLAR.

But as his daughter brought her up?  
 A Christian  
 Brought up as Jewess?

DAJA.

Yes.

TEMPLAR.

And knows she not  
 What she was born? ne'er has she  
 learned from him  
 That she was born a Christian, not a  
 Jewess?

Never.

DAJA.

TEMPLAR.

Not only did he train the child  
 In this delusion, but in this delusion  
 Allow the maid to rest?

DAJA.

Alas, too true!

TEMPLAR.

Could Nathan, wise and good, allow  
 himself  
 The voice of Nature thus to falsify;  
 Thus misdirect the emotions of a heart  
 Which of themselves had flowed in  
 other channels?  
 A something you indeed have told me,  
 Daja,  
 Which is of weight; is big with con-  
 sequences;  
 Bewilders me; throws doubt upon my  
 course.—  
 I must have time. Go! He will come  
 this way,  
 And might surprise us. Go!

DAJA.

Ah, that were death!

TEMPLAR.

I am unfit to meet him. If you see  
 him,  
 Say that before the Sultan he shall  
 find me.

DAJA.

No hint to him! Reserve that till the  
 last,  
 To take from him all scruples touch-  
 ing Recha.  
 But when you take her back to Europe,  
 Knight,  
 Pray, leave me not behind.

TEMPLAR.

We'll see. Go, go!

## ACT FOURTH.

## SCENE I.

*The cloisters of the Monastery. The LAY-BROTHER; afterwards the TEMPLAR.*

## LAY-BROTHER.

Ay, ay; the Patriarch's in the right;  
'tis true,  
Of all the matters he intrusted to me,  
Not many would succeed. But why  
intrust  
Such matters to me? I've no knack  
at plotting,  
Persuading, thrusting everywhere my  
nose,  
In every dish my fingers. But for  
this  
Did I forsake the world, to be involved  
More deeply in it by affairs of others?

TEMPLAR (*approaching him hurriedly*).

You're here, good brother! I have  
sought you long.

## LAY-BROTHER.

Me, Knight?

## TEMPLAR.

Have you so soon forgotten me?

## LAY-BROTHER.

Not so; I only thought that ne'er in  
life  
Would further sight of you be granted  
me;  
Although I prayed to Heaven that it  
might. God knows  
How much I loathed my errand to the  
Knight:  
He knows if ready ear I hoped to  
find;  
Knows how I was rejoiced, at heart  
rejoiced,  
That you would give it scarce a  
thought, but flatly  
Rejected what would ill become a  
knight.—

But now you seek me. It has taken  
effect.

## TEMPLAR.

You know why I am come. I scarce  
could tell.

## LAY-BROTHER.

You have considered it; find, after all,  
The Patriarch not so wrong; that fame  
and fortune  
Lie in his offer; that a foe's a foe,  
Were he seven times our guardian  
angel. That,  
All that, with flesh and blood you've  
balanced well,  
And come and offer for the work.  
Alas!

## TEMPLAR.

Good man, take comfort; not for that  
I come;  
Not therefore do I seek the Patriarch.  
His offer do I still esteem as then.  
For all the world could give, I would  
not lose  
The approval once vouchsafed me by a  
man  
So honest, kind, and true. I only come  
To ask the Patriarch's counsel in a  
matter—

## LAY-BROTHER.

The Patriarch's? Seeks a knight a  
priest's—  
[*Casting a frightened look around.*]

## TEMPLAR.

Yes, brother;  
The case is somewhat priestly.

## LAY-BROTHER.

Ne'er would priest  
Consult a knight, the case be e'er so  
knightly.

## TEMPLAR.

For 'tis the priest's prerogative to err;  
One we'll not greatly envy him. Indeed,



Concerned this matter but myself alone,  
 Were I but to myself accountable,  
 What need of Patriarch? But some things there are  
 I'd rather do amiss by others' judgment,  
 Than wisely by my own. Besides, I've learned  
 Religion also is a party thing;  
 The most impartial, as he deems himself,  
 Defends unconsciously his favorite side.—  
 Since so it is, we must suppose it right.

LAY-BROTHER.

I would be silent—understanding not  
 The Knight.

TEMPLAR.

And yet—(what is it here I want—  
 Decree or counsel?—counsel plain or learned?)  
 Thanks, brother, for the hint. Why Patriarch?  
 Be you my Patriarch; for it is the Christian  
 Within the Patriarch that I would consult,  
 And not the Patriarch in the Christian.  
 Listen!

LAY-BROTHER.

No further, Knight—no further! To what purpose?  
 The Knight mistakes me. He who has much knowledge  
 Has many cares, and I am pledged to one.  
 But see—he comes himself, most happily.  
 Wait where you are; already he has seen you.

SCENE III.

*The PATRIARCH advancing in great pomp on one side of the cloisters, and the preceding.*

TEMPLAR.

I would I could escape. He's not my man!

A red, fat, jolly prelate; and what state!

LAY-BROTHER.

See him arrayed for court! Now he but comes  
 From visiting the sick.

TEMPLAR.

How Saladin  
 Must blush before him!

PATRIARCH (*signs to the Brother*).

Here!—I see the Templar.  
 What will he have?

LAY-BROTHER.

I know not.

PATRIARCH (*approaching the Templar, while the brother and attendants fall back*).

Ah, Sir Knight—  
 Most glad so gallant a young man to greet;  
 Ay, still so young! Great things will come of you,  
 God helping.

TEMPLAR.

Scarcely greater, reverend Sir,  
 Than what have come; more likely somewhat less.

PATRIARCH.

I hope at least a knight so pious may bloom  
 And flourish long, an honor and a gain  
 To Christendom and to the cause of God;  
 Which cannot fail if, wisely, youthful daring  
 Will use the ripe experience of age.  
 How can I serve the Knight?

TEMPLAR.

By giving that  
 In which my youth is wanting—counsel.

PATRIARCH.

Gladly,  
Provided, only, counsel will be taken.

TEMPLAR.

Not blindly, certainly?

PATRIARCH.

I say not blindly.

No man indeed should fail to use the reason

That God has given him—in its proper place.

But is that everywhere? Oh no! For instance:

Should God vouchsafe to show us by an angel—

That is, a servant of His holy word—

A means of furthering, establishing the welfare of all Christendom, the good

Of Holy Church in an especial manner, Who would presume to let his reason question

The absolute authority of Him Who made that reason—try the eternal law

Of Heaven's high majesty by narrow rules

Of idle honor. But enough of this. Now on what question seeks the Knight our counsel?

TEMPLAR.

Suppose, most reverend Father, that a Jew

Should have an only child, an only daughter—

Trained up in every virtue by his care, Loved more than his own soul, who, in return,

Loves him with fond devotion—and 'twere told

To one of us the girl was not his daughter;

That he had bought, found, stolen her, what you will,

In childhood; and that further it was known

She was a Christian, and had been baptized,—

The Jew had only brought her up a Jewess,

Would only have her taken for a Jewess,  
And his own daughter. Say, most reverend Father,  
How shall such case be dealt with?

PATRIARCH.

Ah, I shudder!

First let the knight explain if this be fact

Or but hypothesis; that is to say, If he invented it, or if 'twere done, Be doing now.

TEMPLAR.

That deem I unimportant;  
I would but learn your Reverence's opinion.

PATRIARCH.

Deem unimportant! There the Knight may see

How pride of human reason will mislead

In matters spiritual. Not unimportant; For is the case proposed a play of wit,

It merits not my serious reflection. I should refer the Knight to any theater

Where with applause the pros and cons are argued.

But if the Knight put no stage trick upon me;

If this be fact; if in our diocese, In our dear city of Jerusalem,

He have been witness to it;—then—

TEMPLAR.

What then?

PATRIARCH.

Then should be executed on the Jew, Without delay, the penalty decreed Against such crimes, such outrages, by laws Imperial and papal.

TEMPLAR.

So?

PATRIARCH.

Those laws  
Decree to any Jew who from the faith  
A Christian shall pervert, the stake—  
the flames—

TEMPLAR.

So?

PATRIARCH.

How much more to one who shall have  
torn  
By violence from her baptismal vows  
A Christian child! For all is violence  
That's done to children, is it not?—  
that is,  
Excepting what the Church may do to  
children.

TEMPLAR.

But if the child in misery had died,  
Unless the Jew had had compassion  
on it?

PATRIARCH.

It matters not; the Jew goes to the  
stake!  
Better the child had died in misery here  
Than thus be saved for everlasting  
ruin.—  
Besides, why need the Jew anticipate  
God's providence? Without him God  
can save,  
If save he will.

TEMPLAR.

And e'en in spite of him,  
I trow, accord salvation.

PATRIARCH.

Matters not;  
The Jew goes to the stake!

TEMPLAR.

I grieve to hear it.  
The more because the girl is trained,  
'tis said,  
In no religion rather than his own;  
And has been taught no more nor less  
of God  
Than satisfies her reason.

PATRIARCH.

Matters not;  
The Jew goes to the stake!—a triple  
stake,  
For that alone he'd merit. Let a child  
Grow up with no religion—teach it  
naught  
Of the important duty of believing!  
That is too much! I marvel, Knight,  
that you—

TEMPLAR.

The rest in the confessional, God wil-  
ling,  
Most reverend Sir. [*About to go.*]

PATRIARCH.

You give no explanation?  
You name me not this criminal, this  
Jew?  
Produce him not? But I have means  
at hand.  
I'll instantly to Saladin. The Sultan,  
According to the treaty he has sworn,  
Must, must protect us; in the rights,  
the doctrines  
That for the true religion we may claim,  
He must protect us. The original,  
Thank God, is ours. We have his hand  
and seal.  
'Twere easy to convince him, too, the  
State,  
By this believing nothing, is endangered;  
All hold upon the citizen dissolved.  
When he's permitted to believe in noth-  
ing.  
Away with such a scandal!

TEMPLAR.

I regret  
Not having greater leisure to enjoy  
So excellent a sermon. Saladin  
Has summoned me.

PATRIARCH.

The Sultan?—Then—indeed—

TEMPLAR.

I will, if it shall please your Reverence,  
Prepare the Sultan.

PATRIARCH.

Ah!—The Knight, I know,  
Found favor with the Sultan. I but  
pray  
To be remembered favorably to him.  
My only motive is my zeal for God.  
If I in aught exceed, 'tis for his sake.  
I pray the Knight will so consider it.  
That tale about the Jew was but a problem—  
Not so, Sir Knight? That is to say—

TEMPLAR.

A problem. [Goes.]

PATRIARCH.

(Yet one that must be sifted to the bottom.  
Another excellent commission that  
For brother Bonafides.)—Here, my son!

[Goes out in conversation with the  
Lay-brother.]

## SCENE III.

*A room in the Sultan's palace. A number of slaves bring in bags and lay them side by side upon the floor.*  
SALADIN; soon afterwards SITTAH.

SALADIN (entering).

What! 'Tis not ended yet! Is much  
remaining?

SLAVE.

As much again.

SALADIN.

Then take the rest to Sittah.—  
Where tarries Hafi? Hafi should be  
here  
To take immediate charge of this. Or  
were it  
Not better carried to my father? Here  
It will but slip away from me. 'Tis  
true,  
One's heart grows hard at last; and  
even now

'Twould take some skill to squeeze  
much out of me.

At least, until the moneys come from  
Egypt,

The poor must make what shift they  
can.—The alms

About the sepulchre, if only they  
Might be continued; if the Christian  
pilgrims

Need only not go empty-handed; if—

SITTAH.

What means all this? Why all this  
gold for me?

SALADIN.

Repay yourself from it, and lay up store,  
If any's over.

SITTAH.

Nathan not yet come  
With the young Templar?

SALADIN.

He is everywhere  
In search of him.

SITTAH.

See what I found but now,  
While searching 'mongst my jewels.

[Showing him a miniature.]

SALADIN.

Ha! My brother!  
'Tis he—'tis he! Was he—was he! Alas!  
My noble boy! oh, why so early lost!  
What might I not have done, with you  
beside me?  
Leave me the picture, Sittah. Well I  
know it.  
He gave it to your sister, to his Lilla,  
One morning when she hung about his  
neck,  
And would not let him go. It was the  
last.  
He rode abroad. I let him go—alone.  
Poor Lilla died of grief, and ne'er for-  
gave me  
That I should let him thus ride forth  
alone.—  
He came not back.

SITTAH.

Poor brother!

SALADIN.

Be it so!

One day we all shall go and come not back.—

Besides—who knows—Not death alone defeats

The hopes of such as he. More foes he has;

And oft the strongest yields him like the weakest.

Be with him as it may!—The Templar's face

I must compare with this;—must read in this

How far my fancy has misled me.

SITTAH.

Yes;

For that I brought it here. But give it me!

I'll tell you best; a woman's eye sees quicker.

SALADIN (*to an attendant who enters*).

Who's there? If 'tis the Templar, bid him enter.

SITTAH.

That you be not disturbed, nor he confused

By my examination—

[*Sits herself upon a sofa, her face partly averted, and drops her veil*]

SALADIN.

That is well!

(Now for his voice—how will it be with that?)

The tones of Assad slumber still within me.)

SCENE IV.

The TEMPLAR and SALADIN.

TEMPLAR.

Your prisoner, Sultan—

SALADIN.

Prisoner? Grant I life,  
And grant not freedom too?

TEMPLAR.

What you may grant  
'Tis mine to learn, and not anticipate.

But, Sultan, thanks to offer for my life  
Accords not with my character or Order.

At any call that life is at your service.

SALADIN.

I ask you but to use it not against me.  
My foe I grudge not one more pair of hands;

But 'twould go hard one more such heart to give him.

I've been in naught deceived in you,  
young man—

You're Assad o'er again in form and soul.

Yea, I might ask you where through all these years

You've been in hiding; sleeping in what cave;

What kindly power, within what Ginnistan,

Has kept my flower from year to year so fresh.

I might attempt to call up memories  
Of what we did together here or there;

Might chide you that you kept one secret from me;

Excluded me from one adventure. Yes,  
That might I if I look not at myself,

But only you.—Enough. Of these sweet dreams

So much at least is true, that in my autumn

An Assad is to bloom for me again.

Consent you, Knight?

TEMPLAR.

Whatever comes from you  
Already lies, a wish, within my heart.

SALADIN.

That test we on the instant. Stay with me,

About me. As a Mussulman or Christian,  
Alike to me! In turban or in hat,  
White cloak or Turkish mantle—as you  
will!

I ne'er required one bark on every tree.

TEMPLAR.

Else were you not, as now you are,  
the hero,  
Who fain would be God's husband-  
man.

SALADIN.

So then,

If thus you judge me, we are half  
agreed.

TEMPLAR.

Quite!

SALADIN (*offering his hand*).

Done?

TEMPLAR (*grasping it*).

A bargain! More receive with this  
Than you could force from me. I'm  
wholly yours!

SALADIN.

Too much to gain in one short day—too  
much!

Came *he* not with you here?

TEMPLAR.

Who?

SALADIN.

Nathan.

TEMPLAR (*coldly*).

No;

I came alone.

SALADIN.

Yours was a noble deed;  
And what a happy chance that such a  
deed

Should work the good of such a man!

TEMPLAR.

Oh yes.

SALADIN.

So coldly? Nay, young man, be not so  
cold

When you are made God's instrument  
for good;

Nor wish through modesty so cold to  
seem.

TEMPLAR.

Why are all things on earth so many-  
sided,

And all their sides so hard to reconcile!

SALADIN.

Hold always to the best, and give God  
thanks.

'Tis His to reconcile them. But, young  
man,

If you will be so difficult, I too

Must be upon my guard with you. I  
too,

Alas, have many sides which oft seem  
hard

To reconcile.

TEMPLAR.

You pain me; for suspicion  
Is scarce among my faults.

SALADIN.

Whom, then, suspect?

Nathan, it seems; but how? Nathan  
suspected?

Explain; give your first proof of con-  
fidence.

TEMPLAR.

Naught have I against Nathan; with  
myself

I'm angry.

SALADIN.

And for what?



TEMPLAR.

For having dreamed  
That Jew could e'er be aught but Jew;  
that waking  
I should have dreamed.

SALADIN.

Out with your waking dream!

TEMPLAR.

Of Nathan's daughter you have heard.  
The deed  
I did for her, I did—because I did it.  
Too proud to reap the thanks I had  
not sowed,  
I haughtily refused from day to day  
To see the girl. The father was away:  
But he returns; he hears; he seeks me  
out;  
He thanks me; hopes that I may like  
his daughter;  
He talks of happy prospects for the  
future.  
And I allow myself to be persuaded;  
Go, see her, find indeed a maiden—Ah,  
I must take shame upon me, Sultan.

SALADIN.

Shame?  
Because a Jewish maiden charmed you?  
Never.

TEMPLAR.

Because my over-hasty heart, misled  
By Nathan's flattering words, scarce  
made resistance,  
Oh fool! again I sprang into the flames;  
For now I sued, and now was I dis-  
dained.

SALADIN.

Disdained?

TEMPLAR.

Not utterly did he reject me,  
The cautious father: but he must con-  
sider;  
Must make inquiries. Did I not the  
same?

Did I not first consider and inquire,  
When she was shrieking in the flames?  
By heaven!  
A noble thing to be so wise, so cau-  
tious!

SALADIN.

Nay; be indulgent to his years! How  
long  
Will his refusal hold? till you turn  
Jew?

TEMPLAR.

Who knows?

SALADIN.

Who knows? He who reads  
Nathan better.

TEMPLAR.

That superstition which has grown with  
us,  
Know it for superstition though we  
may,  
Relaxes not for that its hold upon us.  
Not all who scorn their chains are free.

SALADIN.

Well said;  
But Nathan—

TEMPLAR.

'Tis the worst of superstitions  
To deem one's own the most endurable.

SALADIN.

That may be so; but Nathan—

TEMPLAR.

As the one  
In which alone purblind humanity  
May trust, till it can bear the clearer  
day  
Of truth; the only one—

SALADIN.

Well, well; but Nathan!

Such weakness cannot be the doom of  
Nathan.

TEMPLAR.

So thought I too; but if this paragon  
Were so the common Jew, that Christian children  
He seeks to gain, to bring them up as  
Jews—  
What then?

SALADIN.

Who is it brings such charge  
against him?

TEMPLAR.

That very maiden he decoyed me with,  
With hope of whom he seemed so glad  
to pay  
The service I was not to be allowed  
To render her for nothing;—she herself  
Is not his daughter, but a Christian  
child  
Lost to her faith.

SALADIN.

Whom yet he could refuse you?

TEMPLAR.

Refuse or not, I have discovered him!  
This tolerant pretender is exposed!  
I'll set upon the track of this Jew wolf  
In his sheep's clothing of philosophy,  
Hounds that shall tear and worry.

SALADIN (*earnestly*).

Gently, Christian!

TEMPLAR.

What! gently, Christian? Mussulman  
and Jew  
Are to insist on Mussulman and Jew  
And only Christians must not act a  
Christian?

SALADIN (*more earnestly*).

Be gentle, Christian!

TEMPLAR.

Fully do I feel  
The burden of reproach that Saladin  
Compresses in those words.—If I but  
knew  
How Assad would have done, had he  
been here!

SALADIN.

But little better; just as violent.  
Who taught you thus to bribe me with  
a word,  
Like him? Indeed, if what you tell be  
true,  
I have been disappointed in this Na-  
than.—  
Still he's a friend: ne'er must one  
friend of mine  
Have quarrel with another.—Be ad-  
vised;  
Move cautiously; denounce him not in  
haste  
To your fanatics; rather hide a deed  
Your priesthood would appeal to me to  
avenge.  
Be not a Christian to the injury  
Of Jew or Mussulman.

TEMPLAR.

Almost too late!  
Thanks to the Patriarch's eagerness for  
blood  
I shrank from being his tool.

SALADIN.

Ere seeking me  
You sought the Patriarch?

TEMPLAR.

In the storm of passion,  
The whirl of doubt! Forgive! No  
more of Assad  
Will you acknowledge in me now, I  
fear.

SALADIN.

That very fear! Methinks I know the  
faults  
From which our virtue grows. Cherish  
but this,

And those shall not weigh heavily  
 against you.  
 But go; seek Nathan as he sought for  
 you,  
 And bring him hither. I must clear  
 away  
 All difference between you. Are you  
 earnest  
 About the maiden, be at rest. She's  
 yours;  
 And Nathan pays the penalty for keep-  
 ing  
 A Christian child from eating pork.  
 Now go!

## SCENE V.

SALADIN *and* SITTAH.

SITTAH.  
 Most wonderful!

SALADIN.

Confess, a handsome boy  
 My Assad must have been,

SITTAH.

If it be he  
 The picture represents, and not the  
 Templar.  
 But how could you forget to learn his  
 parents?

SALADIN.

And chief, his mother—if she e'er were  
 here?  
 Is that it, Sittah?

SITTAH.

You shall pay for that!

SALADIN.

Naught likelier; for such a favorite  
 Was Assad with the beauteous Chris-  
 tian ladies,  
 Was of the Christian ladies so en-  
 amored,  
 The story ran—Nay, best not speak of  
 it.

Enough, I have him back; with all his  
 faults,  
 With all the fancies of his too fond  
 heart.  
 Will have him back. O Sittah, must  
 not Nathan  
 Give him the maiden?

SITTAH.

Give her? Leave her to him!

SALADIN.

True; for what right has Nathan over  
 her,  
 If he be not her father? Who preserved  
 Her life, alone can claim the rights of  
 him  
 Who gave it.

SITTAH.

How if you should place the maiden  
 Beneath your own protection, Saladin—  
 At once withdraw her from her  
 wrongful keeper?

SALADIN.

Would that be necessary?

SITTAH.

Necessary  
 Indeed 'tis not; my curiosity  
 Alone suggests the counsel. There are  
 men  
 Of whom I'd know at once what girl  
 they love.

SALADIN.

Send for her then.

SITTAH.

Have I permission, brother?

SALADIN.

Spare Nathan only; Nathan must not  
 think  
 We want to force her from him.

SITTAH.

Have no fear.

SALADIN.

And I myself must learn what keeps  
Al-Hafi.

SCENE VI.

*The open court of Nathan's house,  
looking toward the palms, as in first  
scene of first act. Some of the wares  
therein mentioned are lying about un-  
packed. NATHAN and DAJA.*

DAJA.

Oh, all is beautiful—all exquisite!  
All—such as only you could give—  
Whence came  
That silver stuff with golden vines up-  
on it?  
How costly was it?—That's a wedding-  
dress!  
No queen could want a better.

NATHAN.

Wedding-dress!  
Why wedding-dress?

DAJA.

That was not in your mind  
When you were buying; but that it  
must be, Nathan;  
No other one than that. 'Tis as 'twere  
made  
To grace a bridal. See; the ground  
of silver,  
A type of innocence; the golden streams  
That twine themselves in all directions  
on it,  
A type of riches. Perfect, is it not?

NATHAN.

What fancies are you weaving? Whose  
the dress  
That you're so learnedly interpreting?  
Are you the bride?

DAJA.

I?

NATHAN.

Who then?

DAJA.

I? Good heavens!

NATHAN.

Who then? Whose wedding-dress? All  
this is yours,  
Yours only.

DAJA.

Mine? All meant for me—not Recha?

NATHAN.

Another bale holds those I brought for  
Recha.  
Away with them! off with your silken  
stuffs!

DAJA.

No, tempter; all the treasures of the  
world  
I would not touch, unless you swear to  
me  
This single opportunity to seize.  
Whose like heaven scarce a second time  
will grant.

NATHAN.

How seize?—the opportunity for what?

DAJA.

Feign not such ignorance!—In short,  
the Templar  
Loves Recha. Give her to him. Thus  
your sin,  
Whose secret I can keep for you no  
longer,  
Is ended; Recha is restored to Chris-  
tians—  
Becomes herself again—will be again  
What at the first she was; and all your  
kindness,  
For which no words can give you fitting  
thanks,

Heaps coals of fire no more upon your head.

NATHAN.

The same old story to another tune,  
For which, I fear, it has no sense or measure.

DAJA.

How so?

NATHAN.

Against the Templar have I naught.  
Rather to him than any in the world  
Would I give Rechâ. But—you must have patience.

DAJA.

Patience! that's your old story o'er again.

NATHAN.

Yet a few days have patience.—See,  
who comes?  
A brother from the convent? Ask his pleasure.

DAJA.

What can he want?

[*She approaches and questions him.*]

NATHAN.

Give—and before he asks.—  
(Could I approach the Knight, yet tell him not  
The motive of my curiosity!  
Were that revealed and my suspicion false,  
The secret of her birth is told in vain.)  
What is it?

DAJA.

He would speak with you.

NATHAN.

Admit him;

And leave us.

# SCENE VII.

NATHAN and the LAY-BROTHER.

NATHAN.

(Would that Rechâ's father still  
I might remain!—Why can I not, e'en  
though  
Without the name?—That she herself  
would give,  
Did she but know how gladly I would  
own it.)  
What can I do to serve you, brother?

LAY-BROTHER.

Little.—  
I'm glad to see that Nathan keeps in health.

NATHAN.

You know me then?

LAY-BROTHER.

Who knows you not? Your name  
Has been imprinted in too many hands.  
For many years has it been writ in mine.

NATHAN (*feeling for his purse*).

Come, brother, come; let me refresh it.

LAY-BROTHER.

Thanks!  
I take no alms; 'twere stealing from the poorer.—  
With your permission, I'd refresh in you  
The imprint of my own; for I can boast  
That in your hand a thing of no small value  
By me was laid.

NATHAN.

Your pardon—I am ashamed!  
Say what it was, and take seven times  
its worth  
As an atonement.

LAY-BROTHER.

Hark, while I shall tell  
How first to-day the memory of that  
trust  
By me confided to you was awakened.

NATHAN.

Trust you confided me?

LAY-BROTHER.

Not long ago,  
On Quarantana, near to Jericho,  
I dwelt—a hermit. Arab robbers came,  
Destroyed my cell and little house of  
God,  
And took me captive; but I happily  
Escaped their hands, and to the Patri-  
arch  
I hither fled to beg another place,  
Where I might serve my God in soli-  
tude  
Until my blessed end.

NATHAN.

I'm on the rack,  
Good brother. Make it brief! The trust  
—the trust  
Confided to me!

LAY-BROTHER.

Yet a moment, Nathan,  
The earliest vacant hermitage on Tabor  
The Patriarch promised me, and bade  
me stay  
Meanwhile within the convent as a  
brother.  
There am I now, and hundred times a  
day  
I long for Tabor; for the Patriarch  
Puts every loathsome errand on me.  
Thus—

NATHAN.

Be quick, I pray you.

LAY-BROTHER.

This is it.—A Jew,  
So some one whispered in his ear to-  
day,

Is living here among us,—who has  
trained  
A Christian child as though she'd been  
his daughter.

NATHAN (*amazed*).

What?

LAY-BROTHER.

Hear me out!—When he commis-  
sions me  
To ferret out this Jew without delay,  
No matter where; and flies into a pas-  
sion  
Against so black a crime, which he es-  
teems  
The very sin against the Holy Ghost—  
The sin, that is, which of all other sins  
Brings greatest guilt upon us; though,  
thank God,  
We know not well in what that sin con-  
sists—  
Then suddenly my conscience was  
awakened;  
The thought arose that possibly myself,  
In years gone by, had furnished the  
occasion  
For this unpardonable sin. For say,  
Did not a groom deliver to your care,  
Some eighteen years ago, an infant  
child?

NATHAN.

How say you?—'Twas indeed—yes,  
surely—

LAY-BROTHER.

Nathan,  
Look at me well!—That groom was I!

NATHAN.

Was you?

LAY-BROTHER.

The Knight from whom I brought it  
you was named,  
If I mistake not, Filneck—Wolf von  
Filneck.

NATHAN.

You're right.



LAY-BROTHER.

The mother had but lately died;  
The father was commanded suddenly  
To throw himself on—Gazza, as I  
think,  
Where the poor baby could not follow  
him,  
And so was sent to you. 'Twas in  
Darun,  
I think, we found you.

NATHAN.

Right!

LAY-BROTHER.

It were no wonder  
If memory played me false; so many  
masters  
I've served and this one for too brief  
a season.  
At Askalon soon afterward he fell.  
A man to love he was.

NATHAN.

He was indeed.  
How many, many services I owe him!  
He more than once preserved me from  
the sword.

LAY-BROTHER.

Good; all the readier must you then  
have been  
To adopt his little child.

NATHAN.

You may believe it!

LAY-BROTHER.

Where is she, then? She surely is not  
dead!  
Grant she may not have died! If no  
one else  
Have learned her story; happy is her  
fate.

NATHAN.

You think so?

LAY-BROTHER.

Trust me, Nathan; thus I argue:

If close beside the good which I pro-  
pose  
Great evil lurk, I leave the good un-  
done;  
Since of the evil can be little doubt,  
But of the good there's much. 'Twas  
natural  
If you would train the Christian's  
daughter well,  
To train her as your own.—This have  
you done  
In love and truth—but to be so reward-  
ed?  
I'll not believe it.—Wiser had it been  
The Christian to have trained at sec-  
ond-hand  
A Christian; but you would not then  
have loved  
The little daughter of your friend; and  
children  
Need love, though but a wild beast's  
love it be,  
In those first years, above Christianity.  
Christianity will still find time enough.  
Have but the child in health and in-  
nocence  
Grown up before your eyes, in sight of  
God  
She's as she was—Has not Christianity  
Its root in Judaism? It oft has vexed,  
Provoked me e'en to tears, to see how  
Christians  
Forget our Savior was himself a Jew.

NATHAN.

Good Brother, you must intercede for  
me  
When hatred and hypocrisy shall rise  
Against me for a deed—ah, for a deed—  
You, you alone shall know it. Bear it  
with you—  
Into your grave. Ne'er yet has vanity  
Seduced me into telling it to man.  
I tell it only to yourself. I tell it  
To pious simplicity alone; for that  
Alone can know what victories over  
self  
Are possible to the devout believer.

LAY-BROTHER.

Your heart is stirred; the tears are in  
your eyes!

NATHAN.

You found me at Darun—the child and you.

You did not know that Christians just before

Had murdered all the Jews that were in Gath—

Men, women, children; knew not that my wife

And sons, seven hopeful sons, were there among them,

And in my brother's house, where they had fled

For safety, must have perished in the flames.

LAY-BROTHER.

All-gracious God!

NATHAN.

Three days and nights I'd lain  
In dust and ashes before God, and wept

When you arrived. Wept? I had wrestled hard

At times with God; had stormed and raved; had cursed

Myself and all the world; had sworn a hate

Against the Christians, unappeasable.

LAY-BROTHER.

I can believe it!

NATHAN.

Gradually my reason  
Returned to me. She spoke with gentle voice:

"And yet God is; e'en this was God's decree!

Up, then! and practise what you've long believed.

To practise cannot be more difficult  
Than to believe, if you but will. Rise up!"

I stood erect and cried to God: "I will! Oh, will Thou that I will!"—Dismounting then,

You handed me the child, wrapped in your cloak.

All that you said to me, or I to you,

Has been forgot. I know but this: I took

The child; I laid it on my bed; I kissed it;

I threw myself upon my knees, and sobbed,

"O God! of seven, Thou grantest me one again!"

LAY-BROTHER.

You are a Christian, Nathan! Yes, by heaven,

You are a Christian! Never was a better!

NATHAN.

What makes of me a Christian in your eyes,

Makes you in mine a Jew.—Happy for both!

But let us not unman each other longer. This calls for deeds.—Although a sevenfold love

Soon bound me to this lonely stranger girl—

Although the thought of losing all my sons

Again in her is death—if Providence Should claim her back from me, I will obey.

LAY-BROTHER.

That perfects all! That was the very counsel

My heart had longed to give you, and already

Had it been prompted by your own good spirit.

NATHAN.

Only must not the very first who comes Expect to tear her from me!

LAY-BROTHER.

Surely not!

NATHAN.

Who has no greater right to her than I, Must prove at least an earlier—

LAY-BROTHER.

Surely, surely!

NATHAN,

Which nature and the ties of blood  
confer.

LAY-BROTHER.

That I acknowledge.

NATHAN,

Name me then the man  
Who bears relationship to her as  
brother,  
Or uncle, cousin—any kith or kin:  
To him I'll not refuse her—her so  
formed  
By nature and by training to become  
The jewel of every house, of every  
faith.—  
You knew your master and his lineage  
More fully than myself, I hope.

LAY-BROTHER.

But little.  
I served the Knight, as you already  
know,  
Too short a time.

NATHAN,

The mother's family,  
Know you not that at least? Was she  
a Stauffen?

LAY-BROTHER.

'Tis possible. Methinks she was.

NATHAN,

Her brother,  
Was he not Conrad? was he not a  
Templar?

LAY-BROTHER.

If I mistake not, Stay; I have a book  
That was the Knight's. I took it from  
his breast  
The day we buried him at Askalon.

NATHAN,

Well?

LAY-BROTHER.

There are prayers in it—a breviary,  
We call it. That, thought I, a Chris-  
tian man  
May still find useful. Not myself in-  
deed;  
I cannot read—

NATHAN,

No matter! To the point!

LAY-BROTHER.

I have been told that in this little book,  
At the beginning and the end, stand  
written  
The names of both their families, in-  
scribed  
With his own hand.

NATHAN,

The very thing we want!  
Run, fetch me quick this book: Its  
weight in gold  
I'll give you, and a thousand thanks  
besides.  
Run!

LAY-BROTHER.

Willingly; but 'tis in Arabic  
The Knight has written.

NATHAN,

No matter; let me have it!  
God! if I might the maiden still retain,  
And let her purchase for me such a  
son!—  
Scarce possible!—Well, come what will  
of it!—  
But who betrayed it to the Patriarch?  
I'll not forget to ask.—If it were Daja!

SCENE VIII.

DAJA and NATHAN.

DAJA (*hurried and embarrassed*).

Think, Nathan!

NATHAN.

Well?

DAJA.

How terrified she was,  
Poor child! There came just now a  
message from—

NATHAN.

The Patriarch?

DAJA.

From the Sultan's sister, Sittah.

NATHAN.

And not the Patriarch?

DAJA.

Sittah! Hear you not?  
The princess Sittah sends for her.

NATHAN.

Whom? Recha?  
The princess send for her? If it be  
Sittah,  
And not the Patriarch, sends—

DAJA.

Why think of him?

NATHAN.

Have you heard naught from him of  
late? Quite sure?  
And naught betrayed to him?

DAJA.

I, him?

NATHAN.

But say,  
Where stand the messengers?

DAJA.

Before the house.

NATHAN.

'Twere best confer with them in person.  
Come!  
If but the Patriarch have no hand in  
this! [Goes.]

DAJA.

And I—I tremble with another fear.  
The fancied only daughter of a Jew  
So rich as he, might tempt a Mussul-  
man.  
'Tis over with the Templar—he is lost,  
If I accomplish not the second step,  
And tell the girl her story.—Courage—  
courage!  
I'll seize the earliest moment we're  
alone—  
The coming one, if I go with her there.  
A little hint of it upon the way  
Can do no harm.—On! Now or never!  
Courage! [Follows him.]

## ACT FIFTH.

### SCENE I.

*A room in Saladin's palace, where the  
money-bags are still lying.*

SALADIN; soon after, various  
MAMELUKES.

SALADIN [*as he enters*].

The gold still there! and none can find  
the dervise!  
He's stumbled on some chessboard and  
forgot  
Himself: why not me also!—Patience!  
—Well?

A MAMELUKE.

The longed-for tidings, Sultan! Sul-  
tan, joy!  
The caravan approaches from Kahira  
With seven years' tribute from the  
fruitful Nile.

SALADIN.

Good, Ibrahim; you're a welcome mes-  
senger.—

At last, at last!—My thanks for your good news!

MAMELUKE [*waiting*].

(Out with them, then!)

SALADIN.

Why wait you? You may go.

MAMELUKE.

Naught else then for the welcome messenger?

SALADIN.

What would you else?

MAMELUKE.

No present for the bearer?—  
I'm then the first whom Saladin has learned

To pay with words. What honor! I the first

He haggles with!

SALADIN.

Take one of yonder bags.

MAMELUKE.

Not now; not though you offered me the whole.

SALADIN.

Defiant! Come, these two are yours.—  
In earnest?

He goes? is more magnanimous than I?

For to refuse must harder be for him

Than 'tis for me to give.—Here, Ibrahim!

What has come o'er me that so near my end

Would make me seem another than myself?

Will Saladin not die as Saladin?

Then Saladin he must not live.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

News, Sultan!

SALADIN.

If you are come to tell me—

SECOND MAMELUKE.

That the transport  
From Egypt has arrived.

SALADIN.

I've heard already.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Then I am come too late.

SALADIN.

Wherefore too late?  
Bear off a sack or two for your goodwill.

SECOND MAMELUKE.

Say three!

SALADIN.

If you can count as much.—Go, take them!

SECOND MAMELUKE.

There's still a third to come—if come he can.

SALADIN.

How so?

SECOND MAMELUKE.

I know not but his neck is broken.  
Soon as we knew the caravan was come,  
Each started off full speed. The foremost fell.

I got the start and kept it to the city,  
Where Ibrahim had more knowledge of the streets.

SALADIN.

But he who fell, my friend! The man who fell!

Ride back to meet him!

SECOND MAMELUKE.

That indeed will I!  
If he's alive, the half of that is his.

[*Goes.*]

SALADIN.

Another noble fellow! Who besides  
Can boast such Mamelukes? May I not  
think

'Twas my example helped to fashion  
them?

Away then with the thought that at  
the last

They should grow used to any other!

THIRD MAMELUKE.

Sultan,—

SALADIN.

Was't you who fell?

THIRD MAMELUKE.

No. I but come to announce  
That Emir Mansor, leader of the trans-  
port,  
Is now dismounting.

SALADIN.

Bring him hither—quick!  
Ah, here he is!

SCENE II.

EMIR MANSOR *and* SALADIN.

SALADIN.

You're welcome, Emir, welcome!  
How has all gone with you?—O Man-  
sor, Mansor,  
You kept us waiting long.

MANSOR.

This letter tells  
What tumult in Thebais your Abulkas-  
sem  
Was forced to quell, ere it was 'safe to  
start.  
I made all possible dispatch in coming.

SALADIN.

I will believe you.—Take at once, good  
Mansor—

And gladly will you not?—another es-  
cort;

For you must on at once to Lebanon,  
With more than half this treasure to  
my father.

MANSOR.

Right willingly!

SALADIN.

Make not your guard too weak.  
Things are no longer safe on Lebanon.  
Have you not heard?—the Templars  
are astir.

Be on your guard!—But come, where  
halts the transport?

I'd see and urge it forward.—Then to  
Sittah!

SCENE III.

*The palms before Nathan's house.*THE TEMPLAR (*walking to and fro*).

I will not enter.—He'll appear at last.—  
How quick, how eager to observe me  
once!

The time may come when e'en my fre-  
quent presence

Before his house he will forbid.—Hm—  
hm!

But I am most unreasonable, too.—

Why so enraged against him? As he  
said,

He yet has naught refused; and Saladin  
Has promised to persuade him.—Does  
the Christian

Hold me in closer bonds than him the  
Jew?—

Who knows himself? Why should I  
else begrudge

This little theft, that with abundant  
pains

He wrested from the Christians? Little  
theft?

A creature such as she! A creature!—  
whose?

Not of the slave who set the block  
adrift

On life's waste shore, and there de-  
serted it.

Nay, rather of the artist who con-  
ceived



In the rejected block the godlike form,  
 And brought it into life.—Recha's true  
 father  
 Must be, despite the Christian who be-  
 got her,  
 Must be in all eternity the Jew.—  
 If I conceive her as a Christian maiden,  
 Deprived of all that only such a Jew  
 Could give—say, heart—what were her  
 charm for you?  
 But little, nothing!—e'en her smile were  
 naught  
 But gentle soft contraction of the  
 muscles;  
 And that which prompts it would be  
 undeserving  
 Of all the grace it wears upon her lips.  
 No, no—not e'en her smile! As fair or  
 fairer  
 I've seen bestowed upon conceit and  
 folly,  
 On mocking jests, and flatterers and  
 gallants.  
 Did such enchant me or inspire the  
 wish  
 To flutter out my life within their  
 beams?  
 I was unconscious of it; yet am angry  
 With him by whom alone this higher  
 charm  
 Was given.—Deserved I then the irony  
 Of Saladin at parting? Shame enough  
 That Saladin should think it! Oh, how  
 small,  
 How despicable must I seem to him!—  
 All for a girl!—Curd! Curd! Allow it  
 not!  
 Assert your manhood—'Twas but Daja's  
 gossip;  
 It may be nothing she could prove.—  
 But see!  
 He comes at last, engrossed in talk.  
 With whom?  
 My friend the Brother! Then he  
 knows it all;  
 Has been discovered to the Patriarch!  
 What has my madness done? Oh that  
 one spark  
 Of passion should consume our reason  
 thus!  
 Decide at once what next!—I'll stand  
 aside,  
 And watch if they may not part com-  
 pany.

## SCENE IV.

NATHAN and the LAY-BROTHER.

NATHAN.

Thanks once again, good Brother!

LAY-BROTHER.

Mine to you.

NATHAN.

Your thanks to me? for what? My  
 obstinacy  
 In pressing on you what you do not  
 want?  
 If yours had yielded—good; but you  
 were firm—  
 You would not be a richer man than I.

LAY-BROTHER.

Besides, the book's not mine; it is the  
 daughter's—  
 The daughter's sole paternal heritage.—  
 She has yourself indeed. God grant that  
 ne'er  
 You may repent your goodness to her!

NATHAN.

Never;  
 That can I never! Fear not!

LAY-BROTHER.

Nay, but then—  
 The Patriarchs and the Templars—

NATHAN.

Can inflict  
 No evil that shall make me aught re-  
 gret.—  
 Enough of that!—But are you well as-  
 sured  
 A Templar set your Patriarch on the  
 scent?

LAY-BROTHER.

Another scarce seems possible. A Tem-  
 plar  
 Had hardly left him when I heard the  
 story.

NATHAN.

There is but one in all Jerusalem,  
And him I know: he is a friend; a man,  
Young, noble, frank.

LAY-BROTHER.

Right; 'tis the very same.  
A difference lies between what one  
must seem  
Before the world, and what one is.

NATHAN.

Too true.—  
Who'er he be, I dare his worst or best!  
Your book, good brother, bids me all  
defy.  
I go with it straightway to Saladin.

LAY-BROTHER.

Good luck to you! Here will I leave  
you then.

NATHAN.

Without a sight of her? Come soon  
again,  
And often.—If the Patriarch but to-day  
Might not be told!—Yet wherefore?  
Nay; this day  
Disclose whate'er you will.

LAY-BROTHER.

Not I. Farewell! [*Goes.*]

NATHAN.

Forget us not, good Brother!—Gracious  
God!  
Why can I not fall down upon my knees  
Beneath this open heaven! How has  
this knot,  
So long my secret terror, come un-  
loosed  
As of itself! How light my heart has  
grown  
To think there's nothing further in the  
world  
I need to hide; that I can walk erect  
Before my fellow-men as in Thy sight,  
O Thou, who needest not to judge of  
man

According to his deeds—so seldom his!

SCENE V.

NATHAN *and the* TEMPLAR.

TEMPLAR.

Wait; take me with you, Nathan; wait!

NATHAN.

Who calls?  
You, Knight? Where were you that I  
met you not  
Before the Sultan?

TEMPLAR.

We mistook each other.  
Take it not ill!

NATHAN.

Not I! but Saladin—

TEMPLAR.

You just had left him when—

NATHAN.

You spoke with him?  
Then all is well.

TEMPLAR.

But he would speak with both.

NATHAN.

So much the better. Come! I'm on my  
way.

TEMPLAR.

May I inquire who quitted you but now?

NATHAN.

You do not know him then?

TEMPLAR.

If it were not  
That honest Brother who is oft em-  
ployed  
To start the Patriarch's game?

NATHAN.

May be the same;  
He's with the Patriarch.

TEMPLAR.

Not a bad device  
To make simplicity the villain's scout.

NATHAN.

It must be dull simplicity—not honest.

TEMPLAR.

No Patriarch would acknowledge any  
honest.

NATHAN.

I'd vouch for this. The man would ne'er  
assist  
His Patriarch in aught evil.

TEMPLAR.

So at least  
He'd have us think.—But said he naught  
of me?

NATHAN.

He named you not—knows not your  
name, perhaps.

TEMPLAR.

No; hardly.

NATHAN.

Of a Templar said he something—

TEMPLAR.

What?

NATHAN.

That which clearly proved he meant  
not you.

TEMPLAR.

Who knows? Let's hear.

NATHAN.

That one of you accused me  
Before the Patriarch—

TEMPLAR.

One accused you? No;  
There, with his leave, he lied. Believe  
me, Nathan!

I'm not a man who would disown his  
deeds.

What I have done, I've done. Nor am  
I one

Who would defend his every deed as  
right.

Why be ashamed of a mistake? Re-  
solved

Am I to remedy it; and convinced,  
Man may redeem his errors.—Hear me,  
Nathan!

I am the Brother's Templar who, he  
says,

Accused you to the Patriarch. Well  
you know

The provocation which had made my  
blood

Rush boiling through my veins. Fool!—  
I had come

With all my heart and soul to throw  
myself

Into your arms. How coldly you re-  
ceived me;

With what indifference; an indifference  
worse

Than coldness; how intent you were  
politely

To rid yourself of me; how you con-  
trived

Ingenious questions in the place of an-  
swers;—

These things I must not dare to think  
of yet,

If I would keep my temper.—Hear me,  
Nathan!—

In this excitement, Daja stole upon me,  
And flung her secret in my face. The  
key

It seemed to all your contradictions.

NATHAN.

How?

TEMPLAR.

Nay, hear me out!—I fancied you un-  
willing

To give again into a Christian hand  
What from the Christians you had  
stolen, and thought

By furnishing the arms against your  
life,

To silence you for good.

NATHAN.

For good you thought!  
I see no good about it.

TEMPLAR.

Hear me, Nathan!  
I grant I did not well. You are not  
guilty.  
That foolish Daja knows not what she  
says.  
She likes you not; hoped thus to injure  
you,  
May be—may be! I am a simpleton—  
Forever in extremes;—now much too  
hot,  
And now as much too cold. That grant  
I too!  
Forgive me, Nathan!

NATHAN.

If you take me so—

TEMPLAR.

But one word more. I sought the Patri-  
arch,  
But named you not. That, as I said,  
was false.  
I only set before him such a case  
To learn his judgment. That I might  
have spared.  
Knew I him not already for a knave?  
Why not have called you to account  
myself?  
Wherefore, poor girl, expose her to the  
risk  
Of losing such a father?—What befell?  
The Patriarch's baseness, faithful to  
itself,  
Restored me to my senses.—Hear me,  
Nathan—  
Hear to the end! Suppose he knew your  
name—  
What then? He has no right to take the  
girl  
If she belong to any but yourself.  
From your home only can he have the  
right  
To drag her to the cloister.—Therefore  
give—

Give her to me, and let him come. Aha!  
Let him beware how he shall take my  
wife!

Give her me—quick!—be she your child  
or not!

A Christian, Jewess, nothing—naught  
care I!

I'll put no questions to you—neither now  
Nor ever in my life. Be as it may!

NATHAN.

Deem you it necessary for me then  
To hide the truth?

TEMPLAR.

Be as it may!

NATHAN.

I ne'er  
To you or any who had claim to know  
Denied she was a Christian, and to me  
But an adopted daughter. Why, you  
say  
Conceal it from herself? To her alone  
Need I excuse myself.

TEMPLAR.

Not e'en to her!  
Let her ne'er look on you with other  
eyes.  
Oh, spare her the disclosure! You  
alone  
Have still disposal of her. Give her me!  
I pray you, Nathan, give her me! I  
only  
Again can save her to you, and I will.

NATHAN.

Could—could! No longer possible—too  
late!

TEMPLAR.

How so—too late?

NATHAN.

Thanks to the Patriarch—

TEMPLAR.

Thanks to the Patriarch! Wherefore  
thanks to him?

Has he desired to earn our thanks? For what?

NATHAN.

That we have learned her family; have learned  
Into whose hands she may be given up.

TEMPLAR.

The thanks I leave to those he has obliged.

NATHAN.

From theirs must you receive her now, not mine.

TEMPLAR.

Poor Recha, how must all this fall on you!

What were a happiness to other orphans

Is your misfortune.—Nathan!—Where are they,

These relatives?

NATHAN.

Where are they?

TEMPLAR.

Who are they?

NATHAN.

A brother first; from him she must be sought.

TEMPLAR.

A brother! And this brother, what is he?

Priest—soldier? Let me hear what hope I have.

NATHAN.

Neither or both. I've not yet learned him quite.

TEMPLAR.

What more?

NATHAN.

An honest man; to whom our Recha May well be trusted.

TEMPLAR.

Yet a Christian!—Nathan, How can I understand you?—Be not angry!—

Must she not play the Christian with the Christians, And take at last the character she plays? Will not the grain you sowed so pure, be choked

By weeds at last? And you so careless of it!

This notwithstanding can you say—you say—

She may be safely trusted with her brother?

NATHAN.

I think it—hope it. Should she want for aught

With him, has she not still yourself and me?

TEMPLAR.

Can any thing be wanting her with him?

Will not dear brother give his little sister

Enough of food and clothing, finery

And dainties? What can little sister want

Besides?—A husband, to be sure! Well, well;

That too, in time, dear brother will provide.

They're always to be had; and all the better

The more he is a Christian.—Nathan, Nathan!

Why fashion such an angel to be marred

By other men?

NATHAN.

Fear not; she will remain Abundantly deserving of our love.

TEMPLAR.

Nay, say not that; of my love say it not!  
My love will brook no change in her—  
not one;  
No veriest trifle—e'en a name.—But hold!  
Has a suspicion reached her of her fate?

NATHAN.

Perhaps; yet hardly could I tell from whom.

TEMPLAR.

It matters not;—I must, I will be first  
To let her know the fate that threatens her.  
My purpose ne'er to see, ne'er speak with her  
Till I might call her mine, is changed.  
I haste—

NATHAN.

Stay; whither would you go?

TEMPLAR.

To her; to her,  
To learn if in her maiden soul there lie  
Enough of manhood for the one resolve  
Which only would be worthy of her.

NATHAN.

What?

TEMPLAR.

To let her heart no longer dwell on you  
Or on her brother—

NATHAN.

But?—

TEMPLAR.

To follow me;

Though 'twere to make herself a Moslem's wife.

NATHAN.

Stay; you would find her not. She is with Sittah,  
The Sultan's sister.

TEMPLAR.

When was that—and why?

NATHAN.

If you would see the brother with them—come!

TEMPLAR.

Whose brother? Sittah's—Recha's?

NATHAN.

Both, perhaps.  
But come with me—I pray you, come with me! [*Leads him away.*]

SCENE VI.

*Sittah's harem. SITTAH and RECHA in conversation.*

SITTAH.

What pleasure shall I take in you, sweet child!  
But be not so reserved, so shy, so troubled;—  
Be gay; more talkative; more friendly with me.

RECHA.

Princess—

SITTAH.

No, no; not Princess; call me Sittah—  
Your friend—your sister—mother, if you will!

That might I almost be.—So young, so wise,

So good; with so much knowledge!—  
Ah, how much

You must have read!



RECHA.

I must have read!—Ah, Sittah,  
You're laughing at your foolish little  
sister.  
I scarce know how to read.

SITTAH.

What? story-teller!  
You scarce know how?

RECHA.

My father's hand a little.  
I thought you spoke of books.

SITTAH.

Yes, yes—of books.

RECHA.

No; I should find it hard to read in  
books.

SITTAH.

Are you in earnest?

RECHA.

I am quite in earnest.  
My father cares not for that cold book-  
learning  
That's printed on the brain by lifeless  
signs.

SITTAH.

What do you tell me!—Yet he's partly  
right.  
Then all you know—

RECHA.

Is only from his lips.  
Scarce anything, but I could tell you  
how,  
And where, and why, my father taught  
it me.

SITTAH.

Thus all is better woven into one:  
The whole soul learns at once.

RECHA.

And Sittah too—  
Has surely little read, or nothing.

SITTAH.

Why?  
I would not boast the contrary; but  
why?  
Your reason; tell me candidly—your  
reason?

RECHA.

She is so true and honest; so un-  
spoiled;  
Acts out herself so naturally;—

SITTAH.

Well?

RECHA.

My father says books rarely leave us so.

SITTAH.

How wise a man he is!

RECHA.

Yes; is he not?

SITTAH.

How near he hits the mark!

RECHA.

Ah, does he not?  
And yet this father—

SITTAH.

What disturbs you, love?

RECHA.

This father—

SITTAH.

Heavens! You weep?

RECHA.

This father—Ah,  
I must speak out;—my heart must have  
relief!

[Throws herself, overpowered by her  
tears, at Sittah's feet.]

SITTAH.

Recha! What ails you, child?

RECHA.

This father—must—

Ah, must I lose!

SITTAH.

Must lose your father! Why?  
Compose yourself!—Impossible!—Stand  
up!

RECHA.

It shall not be in vain that you have of-  
fered  
To be my friend, my sister!

SITTAH.

I am both.  
But rise; else must I call for help.

RECHA [*controls herself, and rises*].

Forgive;  
Your pardon!—In my grief I had for-  
got  
To whom I spoke. No moaning, no de-  
spair  
Avails with Sittah. Naught has power  
with her  
But cold, calm reason. Whosoever  
cause  
That pleads before her, conquers.

SITTAH.

Well?

RECHA.

My friend,  
My sister, suffer not—oh, suffer not  
Another father to be forced upon me!

SITTAH.

Another father forced upon you, love?  
Who has the power, the wish to do it?

RECHA.

Who?  
My good, bad Daja has the wish, and  
claims

The power. Know you her not, this  
good, bad Daja?  
God pardon her for it—reward her  
for it!  
Such good as she has done me—and  
such harm!

SITTAH.

Done harm to you! Small good is in  
her then.

RECHA.

Nay, much—how much!

SITTAH.

Who is she?

RECHA.

She's a Christian,  
Who tended me in childhood with such  
care;  
You cannot think! She scarcely let me  
miss  
My mother.—God reward her!—But be-  
sides,  
She so distressed and tortured me!

SITTAH.

With what?  
And wherefore?

RECHA.

Ah, poor woman! As I said,  
She is a Christian, and from very love  
Must torture me. She is of those  
fanatics  
Who think they know the universal,  
true,  
And only road to God.

SITTAH.

I understand.

RECHA.

And feel a charge upon them to con-  
duct  
The feet of every wanderer thither-  
ward.

They scarce can otherwise. If it be true

This is the only road that leads aright,  
Can they resign themselves to see their friends

Advancing on another which descends  
To death, eternal death? They needs must love

And hate one at the selfsame time.—  
Not that

Has forced from me such loud complaints

Against her. Gladly would I still have borne

Her sighs and prayers, her threats and warnings—gladly!

For good and useful were the thoughts they roused.

Besides, how not be flattered too at heart

At being held so precious and so dear  
By any, that the thought of losing us

For all eternity cannot be borne?

SITTAH.

'Tis true.

RECHA.

But this—this is too much! 'Gainst this  
I've no defence; not patience, not reflection,

Not anything!

SITTAH.

What? Whom?

RECHA.

What she but now  
Pretended to reveal.

SITTAH.

Reveal but now?

RECHA.

But now.—Upon our way to you we neared

A ruined Christian temple. Suddenly  
She stopped; appeared to struggle with herself;

Directed now to heaven and now on me

Her streaming eyes, "Come," finally she said,

"We'll take the shortest path through yonder temple."

She went; I followed, gazing with afright

Upon the tottering ruins. Once again  
She stopped; and I beheld myself with her

Before the steps of a decaying altar.

Ah, how I felt, when here, with burning tears

And wringing of her hands, she threw herself

Upon the ground before me!—

SITTAH.

Darling child!

RECHA.

And by the Deity who there had heard  
So many prayers, and worked so many wonders,

Conjured me—yes, with looks of true compassion—

Conjured me to have pity on myself!—  
At least to pardon her, for she must tell

Her Church's claim upon me.

SITTAH.

Ah, poor girl;

'Tis as I thought.

RECHA.

I had been born, she said,  
Of Christian parents; I had been baptized;

I was not Nathan's child—he not my father!

God! God! He not my father!—Sit-tah! Sittah!

Here at your feet again behold me—

SITTAH.

Recha!

I pray you, rise! My brother comes!  
Stand up!

## SCENE VII.

SALADIN *and the preceding.*

SALADIN.

What trouble, Sittah?

SITTAH.

She's beside herself!

SALADIN.

Who is it?

SITTAH.

You remember—

SALADIN.

Nathan's daughter!

What ails her?

SITTAH.

Child, control yourself!—The Sultan—

RECHA [*her head bowed to the ground, drags herself upon her knees to Saladin's feet*].

I rise not; look not on the Sultan's face;

Behold not on his brow and in his eyes  
The bright reflection of eternal love  
And justice, till—

SITTAH.

Rise; rise!

RECHA.

He promise me—

SALADIN.

I promise;—be it what it may!

RECHA.

No more

Nor less than this—to leave to me my  
father,And me to him. I know not who be-  
sidesWould be my father; who can want to  
be.I will not know.—But is it only blood  
That makes the father—only blood?SALADIN (*raising her*).

I see.

Who was so heartless as to name the  
thing

To you? Is it already settled—proved?

RECHA.

It must be;—Daja says 'twas from my  
nurse

She learned it.

SALADIN.

From your nurse?

RECHA.

Who felt constrained  
Upon her death-bed to confess it to her.

SALADIN.

Upon her death-bed? Possibly she wan-  
dered.—But were it true—your're right! The  
blood aloneMakes not the father—scarce a wild  
beast's father.At most, it but confers the earliest right  
To earn the name. Fear not;—hark to  
my counsel!When these two fathers come to quar-  
rel for you,Dismiss them both and take the third;—  
take me

To be your father!

SITTAH.

Yes, dear Recha, yes!

SALADIN.

I'd make a right good father.—Hold;—  
still better!What need of fathers? What if they  
should die?

But seek betimes for one who would  
brave all  
To live for you. Has none such yet  
been found?

SITTAH.

Make her not blush!

SALADIN.

The very thing I wished!  
If blushes make the ugly fair, they  
surely  
Will make the fair still fairer.—I have  
bid  
Your father, Nathan, hither, and an-  
other—  
Another with him. Guess you not his  
name?  
Hither—with your permission, Sittah.

SITTAH.

Brother!

SALADIN.

Call up a rosy blush for him, dear  
child.

RECHA.

A blush—for whom?

SALADIN.

Ah, little hypocrite!  
Grow pale then, if you choose;—just  
as you will  
And can.

[A female slave enters and addresses  
Sittah.]

Are they arrived already?

SITTAH.

Good;  
You may admit them.—It is they, dear  
brother!

# LAST SCENE.

NATHAN and the TEMPLAR, with the  
*preceding.*

SALADIN.

Welcome, my dear, good friends!—  
You, Nathan, you  
Must I address the first. Send you and  
fetch  
Your money back whene'er you want it.

NATHAN.

Sultan—

SALADIN.

'Tis now my turn to be of service;—

NATHAN.

Sultan—

SALADIN.

The caravan is come. I'm rich again  
As I've not been for many a day.  
Come, come;  
Say what you need to start some enter-  
prise  
Of magnitude. You tradesmen, like our-  
selves,  
Can scarce have too much money.

NATHAN.

Why begin  
With such a trifle?—There are weeping  
eyes  
That I am more concerned with dry-  
ing.—Recha!

[Approaches her.]

You have been weeping;—what dis-  
tresses you?  
Are you not still my daughter?

RECHA.

O my father!

NATHAN.

We understand each other. 'Tis  
enough!—  
Be cheerful; be collected.—Let your  
heart  
Be still your own: let but no other loss  
Have threatened that—your father is  
not lost!

RECHA.

No other; none.

TEMPLAR.

None! Then I was deceived.  
What we fear not to lose, we never  
thought  
Nor wished to own.—So be it.—That  
changes all.  
We came here, Saladin, at your com-  
mand.  
But I misled you;—take no further  
trouble.

SALADIN.

Hasty again, young man! Must every-  
thing  
Concern yourself—have reference but  
to you?

TEMPLAR.

But, Sultan—hear you, see you not your-  
self?

SALADIN.

I do indeed;—pity you made not sure  
Of your position.

TEMPLAR.

'Tis no longer doubtful.

SALADIN.

Who thus presumes upon a benefit,  
Revokes it. What you saved is not  
your own  
Because you saved it. Else as good a  
hero  
Were any thief whose greed will brave  
the fire.

[Approaches Recha to lead her to the  
Templar.]

Come, darling, come; be not too strict  
with him.  
Were he aught else, were he less hot  
and proud,  
He might not have preserved you. Let  
the one  
Excuse the other.—Come; put him to  
shame;  
Do that which should be his—confess  
your love—

Give him your hand; and if he should  
d disdain you—

Should he forget how infinitely more  
You did for him by this than he for  
you—

What did he then for you? get singed a  
little!

But what was that?—then has he naught  
of Assad,

Naught of my brother; wears his like-  
ness only,

And not his heart.—Come, love!

SITTAH.

Yes; go, love, go!  
Your gratitude would deem that little—  
nothing.

NATHAN.

Hold, Saladin! hold, Sittah!

SALADIN.

What—you also?

NATHAN.

There is another has a right to speak.

SALADIN.

Who doubts it? Such a foster-father,  
Nathan,  
Unquestionably has a voice—the first,  
If you desire. You see I know the  
whole.

NATHAN.

Not quite the whole.—I speak not of  
myself.

There is another, quite another, Sultan,  
Whom I entreat to hear me ere he  
speak.

SALADIN.

Who—who?

NATHAN.

Her brother.

SALADIN.

Recha's brother?



NATHAN.

Yes.

RECHA.

My brother! Have I then a brother?

TEMPLAR [*rousing himself from his brooding*].

Where?

Where is this brother? Not yet here?

'Twas here

I was to meet him.

NATHAN.

Patience!

TEMPLAR.

He's imposed

A father on her—why not find a brother?

SALADIN.

That is too much. Shame, Christian!

A suspicion

So base would ne'er have come from Assad's lips.—

Say on!

NATHAN.

Forgive him! I forgive him gladly.

Should we do better, circumstanced like him,

And young?

[*Approaching the Templar kindly.*]

Quite natural that want of trust

Should breed suspicion, Knight. Had you confessed

Your rightful name at once—

TEMPLAR.

How?

NATHAN.

You're no Stauffen.

TEMPLAR.

Who am I then?

NATHAN.

Your name's not Curd von Stauffen.

TEMPLAR.

What then?

NATHAN.

'Tis Leu von Filneck.

TEMPLAR.

How?

NATHAN.

You start!

TEMPLAR.

With reason. Who asserts it?

NATHAN.

I; and more

Have I to tell you. Yet I charge you

not

With falsehood.

TEMPLAR.

No?

NATHAN.

That name may be your own

With equal right.

TEMPLAR.

Ay, truly! (It is God

Who bids him speak.)

NATHAN.

Your mother was a Stauffen.

Her brother, to whose charge in Germany

You were committed when the ungenial air

Had forced your parents to the East again,

Was Curd von Stauffen, who adopted you

Perhaps in place of children of his own. How long since you came hither? Lives he still?

TEMPLAR.

What shall I answer?—All is as you say;  
But he himself is dead. I came not hither  
Until the last detachment of our Order—  
But—but—how bears all this on Recha's brother?

NATHAN.

Your father—

TEMPLAR.

How? Him too—you knew him too?

NATHAN.

He was my friend.

TEMPLAR.

Your friend! How possible?

NATHAN.

The name of Wolf von Filneck did he bear;  
But was no German—

TEMPLAR.

Know you also that?

NATHAN.

Was wedded to a German, and had followed  
Your mother into Germany awhile,

TEMPLAR.

No more, I pray!—But Recha's brother,  
Nathan—  
Her brother?

NATHAN.

Is yourself.

TEMPLAR.

I—I her brother!

RECHA.

Ah, he my brother!

SALADIN.

They are brother and sister.

SITTAH.

They brother and sister!

RECHA (*advancing to him*).

Ah, my brother!

TEMPLAR (*drawing back*).

Brother!

RECHA (*checking herself, and turning to Nathan*).

It cannot—cannot be! There's no response  
Within his heart.—We are impostors!  
God!

SALADIN (*to the Templar*).

Impostors! Do you think it—can you think it?

Yourself the impostor! All in you is false;

Face, voice, and bearing—nothing yours.  
Refuse

To acknowledge such a sister? Go—begone!

TEMPLAR (*approaching him humbly*).

Mistake not you too, Sultan, my surprise.

Ne'er saw you Assad at a time like this.

Oh, be not thus unjust to him and me!

[*Hurrying to Nathan.*]

You give me, Nathan, and you take away—

With full hands both.—But no; you give me more,

More infinitely than you take away.

[*Embracing Recha.*]

My sister, O my sister!

NATHAN.

Henceforth Blanda  
Von Filneck.

TEMPLAR.

Blanda—Blanda—no more Recha—  
Your Recha then no more? God!—You  
reject her—  
You give her back her Christian name—  
reject her  
Because of me! Oh, wherefore call on  
her  
To make atonement, Nathan?

NATHAN.

What atonement?—  
My children, O my children! For will  
he,  
The brother of my daughter, not be-  
come  
Another child to me?

*[While Nathan gives himself up to their  
caresses, Saladin, surprised and un-  
easy, turns to Sittah.]*

SALADIN.

What say you, Sittah?

SITTAH.

For what?

SALADIN *(to Nathan)*.

A word with you—a word!

*[As Nathan joins the Sultan, Sittah ap-  
proaches the brother and sister to ex-  
press her sympathy; Nathan and Sala-  
din speak in whispers.]*

Hark to me, Nathan;—  
Did you not say—

NATHAN.

What?

SALADIN.

That from Germany  
Their father came not—was no Ger-  
man born?

What was he then—whence came he?

NATHAN.

That he ne'er  
Confided to me. Naught of it I learned  
From his own lips.

SALADIN.

And was he then no Frank—  
No native of the West?

NATHAN.

That he confessed.  
He spoke most readily in Persian.

SALADIN.

Persian!  
What need I more? It is—it was him-  
self!

NATHAN.

Who?

SALADIN.

'Twas my brother, surely—'twas my  
Assad!

NATHAN.

Since you yourself have guessed it, read  
in this  
Its confirmation.

*[Handing him the breviary.]*

SALADIN *[opening it eagerly]*.

Ah, his hand—that too  
I recognize again!

NATHAN.

They know of naught.  
It rests with you alone to say how much  
They e'er shall know.

SALADIN *[turning over the leaves]*.

And shall I not acknowledge  
My brother's children—my own blood—  
my children—  
Not own them? Shall I give them up  
to you?

*[Aloud].*

'Tis they—'tis they, dear Sittah—it is they!

My brother's and your brother's children—both!

[*He hastens to embrace them.*]

SITTAH [*following*].

What do I hear?—Ah, should it not be so?

SALADIN [*to the Templar*].

You must—must love me now, hot-headed boy!

[*To Recha.*]

Now am I really what I asked to be—Like it or not!

SITTAH.

I too—I too!

SALADIN [*again to the Templar*].

My son—

My Assad—Assad's son!

TEMPLAR.

I of your blood!

Then were those dreams that clustered round my childhood

Not merely empty dreams.

[*Falls at the Sultan's feet.*]

SALADIN [*raising him*].

Behold the knave!

He something knew of this, and yet could wish

To make me be his murderer. Ah, the knave!

[*They embrace.*]

(*The curtain falls.*)

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

(1729-1781).

Translated by ELLEN FROTHINGHAM

(1835-1902).



TORQUEMADA  
[EXTRACTS]





# TORQUEMADA

[Extracts.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

THE MARQUIS DE FUENTEL, MOSES-  
BEN-HABIB, *Grand Rabbi.*

(*Both enter through the secret door.*)

THE MARQUIS.

There's need of gold. Be lavish of your  
gold.

[THE GRAND RABBI *points to the dish  
loaded with crowns in the middle  
of the table.* THE MARQUIS *exam-  
ines the heap of gold.*]

Good.

THE RABBI.

Thirty piles of gold, and every pile  
Contains a thousand crowns.

THE MARQUIS.

A first-rate plan.

THE RABBI.

The Queen is greedy.

THE MARQUIS.

And the King is thriftless.  
Truth lodges at the bottom of a well;  
Intrigue in golden mines. By dint of  
presents

The leave to live may be won from the  
great.

To 'scape a master or a cozening judge,  
Or prince or priest, a poor man must be  
rich.

All kings are beggars, and require that  
alms  
Be given without stint.

[*To THE RABBI.*]

Away! Descend  
The little staircase, Jew. The King is  
near.

THE RABBI.

Your goodness I implore, my lord.  
There still  
Is time to save the Jewish people?

THE MARQUIS.

Yes.  
The peril's urgent. [*Dismissing him.*]  
Go!

THE RABBI.

I count on you.

THE MARQUIS.

Nay, count upon thy gold.

THE RABBI.

Shall we be let,  
A hopeless, weeping crowd, prostrate  
ourselves  
Before the King and Queen?

THE MARQUIS.

Yes; be it so.  
But, for the moment, go.

THE RABBI.

Oh, day of wrath!  
A hundred aged Jews, unless the King  
Be our protector, must be burned alive  
Here, even in this city of Seville;  
And all the rest, alas! must exiles be.

THE MARQUIS [*sad and thoughtful*].

Yes; all's prepared for that auto-da-fe  
That has been long proclaimed.

THE RABBI,

Pray, it is true  
The King this evening leaves?

THE MARQUIS.

Yes, for one day;  
To-morrow he returns. Our oldest law  
The charter of King Tulgas, sets apart  
The morrow of an execution as  
A day the King and Queen must spend  
in prayer  
Within the convent of Triana.

THE RABBI,

Ah!  
No need to offer prayers to save the  
dead,  
If they who pray were not their slayers.  
Try  
To save us, lord.

THE MARQUIS.

Speak low, and get thee gone.

[THE GRAND RABBI bows to the ground,  
and leaves through the door in the  
tapestry, which closes on him.]

THE MARQUIS [*gazing on the door by  
which he has left, aside.*]

'Tis not thy Jewish hide or people's woe  
That stimulates my anguish and my zeal,  
And drives me to risk all. Alas! when-  
e'er

I hear the hideous funeral knell that's  
toll'd

For the auto-da-fe, I shrink with dread.  
Don Sancho's in a convent, and declines  
To be a monk, is stubborn and un-  
yielding.

He may be flung at any moment on  
The flaming stake. I tremble for him.  
Ah,

Thou frightful cloister, he must leave  
thee! How?

## SCENE II.

THE MARQUIS, THE KING, GUCHO.  
THE KING seems to see nothing. He  
appears to be deeply preoccupied.

THE KING [*aside*].

No need to hurry matters. Better wait.

THE MARQUIS [*to THE KING, making  
a reverence.*]

A great disaster will occur to-day,  
Unless the King prevent.

[THE KING raises his head. THE  
MARQUIS points towards the out-  
side of the palace hidden by the  
great curtain of the gallery at the  
back.]

On yonder square  
A great auto-da-fe takes places in which  
A multitude are to be burned alive.  
There is an edict also which expels  
The Jews, a loyal people whom a monk  
Deprives your Highness of.

THE KING.

A horde we chase,  
A crackling stake. Is this thy great  
disaster?

[*He perceives the dish laden with  
money on the table.*]

Whence comes this gold?  
[*To THE MARQUIS.*] From whom?

THE MARQUIS.

The Jews.

THE KING.

How much?

THE MARQUIS.

The sum amounts to thirty thousand  
crowns;  
It is an offering made in the name  
Of thirty cities.

THE KING.

Well, what do they ask?

THE MARQUIS.

That they be left in quiet.

THE KING.

It is much.

I cannot leave in quiet those who still  
Continue to be Jews.

THE MARQUIS.

My gracious lord,  
Deign to accept this gold a people lays  
In fealty at your feet and at your  
queen's.  
They humbly ask their sovereign to  
forbid  
The burning of a hundred of their race.

THE KING.

'Tis much.

THE MARQUIS.

A hundred?

THE KING.

No. 'Tis much to ask  
That I forbid an auto-da-fe. There is  
My wife who preaches at me; and  
there is  
The Pope. Both are relentless, and I  
must  
Allow them to burn some persons now  
and then,  
Else I should have no peace. What is  
the news?

THE MARQUIS.

Oh, nothing of importance. Stakes are  
lit  
In Cordova, Tudela, Saragossa.

THE KING.

And nothing further?

THE MARQUIS.

Yes. Count Requesens  
One day, when he was drunk, swore by  
the saints;  
His coronet, my liege, did not avail  
To save him from the stake in his own  
town,

Girone. As no lackey had denounced  
This nobleman accused of blasphemy,  
His household was held guilty, and  
atoned

By fire and torture for their master's  
crime.

His very fool was burned.

[GUCHO *leaps up as if startled in  
his sleep.*]

GUCHO [*aside*].

I'll turn at once  
Familiar of the Inquisition! Why,  
The devil take me if I don't begin  
My work upon the spot. Zounds!  
burned alive!  
A plague upon me, if that's what I  
want!

THE KING [*looking at the heap of  
gold.*]

The issue of a bleeding of the Jews;  
The race seems made of gold.

GUCHO [*aside*].

I am content  
To be a looker-on while others roast.

THE MARQUIS [*to* THE KING.]

The Hebrews—

THE KING.

Call them Jews!

THE MARQUIS.

The Jews, my liege,  
A numerous, hard-working people, ask,  
Prostrate before the King, that he allow  
them  
To live in Spain, nor view with angry  
eyes  
The humble slaves that grovel at his feet.  
They ask in fine, my liege, that you  
revoke  
The edict which exiles them.

THE KING.

After that,  
What do they want?

THE MARQUIS.

To die upon the soil  
Whereon their fathers died, and to  
    remain  
In their own country, sire; and I  
    present  
Their ransom. Take it.

THE KING.

If the Queen consent,  
I will consent. Go beg her to come here.

*[At a sign from THE KING, GUCHO goes to the door at the back, and opens it. An officer of the palace appears at the entrance. GUCHO speaks to him in a low voice. The officer bows and retires. The door closes. GUCHO returns to his former position.]*

THE MARQUIS.

The Jews will pass their lives in prayer  
for you.

THE KING.

It is their money, not their prayers, I  
want.  
Their prayers insult me.

THE MARQUIS.

Gracious King, your fathers  
Liked to reign over them. The Jews  
exiled,  
There is a people less within your realm.

THE KING *[imperiously.]*

Enough of this. Much care I for a  
people!  
A girl concerns me more. . . . .

THE MARQUIS.

Ah! but you'll have to deal—

THE KING.

To deal with whom?

THE MARQUIS.

But—

THE KING.

Speak.

THE MARQUIS.

With Torquemada.

THE KING.

What! I, the King!

THE MARQUIS.

And he the inquisitor!

THE KING.

Ah, pshaw!

THE MARQUIS.

My liege, in him the Church exists.  
If he grow wrathful—

THE KING.

Well?

THE MARQUIS.

The Church lays hold  
Of everything with ease, but does not  
    loose  
Her grasp with equal readiness. He is  
Inquisitor. His office is to see  
That convents have their full supply.  
    Nor nun  
Nor monk can fraud or force tear from  
    his hands!  
He prowls around the cloisters, shows  
    his teeth,  
And bites all who approach the tender  
    lambs  
This tawny wolf has under watch and  
    ward.  
The king who braves the priest, sire, is  
    not wise.  
Your path, my liege, is barred by Tor-  
quemada.  
He checks your course, and all your  
wrath is vain.

THE KING.

He is a man and easy to corrupt.

THE MARQUIS.

Well, try.

THE KING.

If 'tis my wish to tame this monk—

THE MARQUIS.

Sire, try.

THE KING.

I can bestow all man desires,  
 Before me proudest heads are lowliest  
 bent;  
 And first, to get the better of a priest,  
 Why, there are women.

THE MARQUIS.

He is old.

THE KING.

Well, then,  
 We have the mitre, purple, a grandee-  
 ship,  
 And many dignities and honours.

THE MARQUIS.

Sire,  
 He will continue monk.

THE KING.

And money.

THE MARQUIS.

Sire,  
 He will continue poor.

THE KING.

Ah, yes, this man  
 Is strong, with all the strength of low-  
 liness  
 And poverty and age.

[THE KING *crosses his arms and  
 muses.*]

Close by myself  
 To feel that sombre poverty which casts  
 A shadow on my throne! which, in its  
 power,  
 Stands on a level with the king!

THE MARQUIS.

Ay, higher!

THE KING.

No!

THE MARQUIS.

Women, honours, gold are powerless  
 Against this monk.

THE KING.

I could find other means.  
 Dost understand?

THE MARQUIS.

No. Which?

THE KING.

The right ones, eh?  
 Dost understand?

THE MARQUIS.

No.

THE KING.

Why, old Arbuez  
 Was stabbed upon the very altar steps.  
 Was not that system good?

THE MARQUIS.

It turned out bad.  
 Old Arbuez became Saint Arbuez,  
 And that was all. You reign, and you  
 allot  
 Domains and dignities, or, if you will,  
 The headsman's axe. But with the hand  
 that tries  
 To hold the Church, she strives with  
 fiery zeal.  
 You persecute her and you make her  
 stronger.  
 The priests have this distinctive  
 quality,—  
 That when you kill them, they're the  
 more alive.  
 They never disappear. From hecatombs  
 Springs into life that spectral form, the  
 priest.  
 Their blood's eternal, and their bones  
 are fruitful.  
 We crush them living, we invoke them  
 dead.



Ah, sire! you think to break the Church's power.  
 She bursts at once her bonds by palms and hymns,  
 By tears and martyrdom. Yes, massacre  
 The cloister's hypocrite, with malice drunk!  
 Strike! It is well. Now raise to heaven  
 your eyes.  
 'Tis filled with saints of your own making, sire!  
 Fold reverent hands and fall upon your knees.  
 I do admire the Church. For, slave or queen,  
 She has her final say. She swarms below  
 Here on this earth; she swarms in heaven above,  
 And crushed as vermin, rises as a star.

THE KING [*depressed.*]

She's the disease, and I am the diseased.  
 Thou sayest truth. Brave Rome, and you repent.  
 We must resign ourselves.

THE MARQUIS [*aside.*]

What does he mean?  
 The danger with him is that if you want  
 A certain course to be pursued by him  
 You must advise the opposite, and if  
 You wish him to go north, you needs  
 must urge  
 His footsteps towards the south. This  
 time I see  
 That he believes my words. My ruse  
 has failed!  
 The tortuous path that I have found  
 so useful  
 Avails not here. I must aim at my  
 goal,  
 And change my style.

[*Aloud.*]

Ah! you have let the monk  
 Grow all too great, and now he has  
 become  
 Of monstrous size.

THE KING [*musings.*]

This Torquemada—

THE MARQUIS.

Sire,  
 Holds Spain. He is her Pontiff, and  
 where'er  
 You lay your finger-nail he puts his claw.  
 He fills your seat. Ah! sire, the time  
 is past  
 When at your royal pleasure you might  
 go  
 Into a convent, and with threatening  
 frown  
 Compel this stubborn Church to own  
 your power.  
 You then might hang a monk. You dare  
 not touch  
 His frock at present. Ah, your monk's  
 a trial!  
 Your gibbets! Strike the priests!  
 Attempt it, sire!  
 Your laws have everything to fear from  
 his;  
 And surely he would laugh to see a fight  
 Between your scaffold and his fiery  
 stake.  
 The duel is unequal. Sire, the earth  
 Owns as its lord this monk; and as wild  
 oats  
 Are set on fire by peasants, living men  
 Are turned to ashes by his flaming torch.  
 The palaces appalled like cloisters look;  
 On every side the clergy sprouts and  
 grows  
 Like brier and bramble. Everything  
 gives way  
 Before the frowning monk. "The devil  
 take  
 The hindmost" is the cry. The proud-  
 est crawl,  
 The bravest tremble. What, my liege,  
 is done  
 From Cadiz to Tortosa through your  
 realm?  
 Your subjects are denouncing one  
 another,  
 Two cousins of your Highness are in  
 chains,  
 The Marquis Alfonso and Prince of  
 Viana,  
 And that coarse hand has even been  
 laid upon  
 The Infante of Tudela. Lately gay  
 Was every town and village in our  
 Spain;  
 To-day a pall of silence over all.

No more the innocent laugh, no more  
the feast,  
A banquet is suspected. Terror, fear,  
And mourning reign in all parts of our  
land,  
And this huge Spain is like a festival  
When all the lights are quenched. Your  
forests, sire,  
Are used for scaffolds; wood begins  
to fail.  
Crimes true and false are intermingled.  
All

Is good to feed the fagots. You have  
seen

Some one pass by you, you are his  
accomplice.

A son betrays his father, father son.  
Who, unaware, lets fall a crucifix  
Is burned alive. A word, a gesture, is  
A heresy. This horrible monk has  
looked

On Jesus with a madman's eye. All acts  
Are heinous crimes. To swear by  
Solomon,

To have the air of whispering to the  
devil,

To pare the nails, go barefoot on fast  
days,

To wed a wife that's too old or too  
young,

To turn a corpse's face towards the  
wall,

Or not to fly before those who bind  
tight

Their loins with leathern cord, to lay  
a cloth

Upon one's table on a Saturday,  
To drive the ox at Christmas from the  
stable,

To name God oftener than Jesus, or  
To hide one's self,—all these lead to  
the stake.

Repeating verses in a funeral train,  
Or weeping, in the shade, behind a door,  
Or watching in some lonely desert spot  
The rising of night's earliest star,—  
these, too,

Are crimes. These blazing piles devour,  
O King,

And mount and ever mount, and more  
and more

With this red dawn empurple all the  
sky

Above you, sire. It is your subjects'  
blood

Which you are robbed of. Soon you  
shall not have

The soldiers which your wars require.  
Just now—

But what avail my words! the King  
cares not,—

The King, who by a word could change  
it all.

But no!—The Holy Office lately placed  
All Spain within a padded cell, and it  
Has come to pass your subjects scarcely  
know you.

*[He points to the gallery at the back  
and the curtain which closes it.  
GUCHO is listening attentively.]*

This very day, O King, beneath your  
window

A monstrous pile of fire will flame to  
heaven,

And there beneath the gaze of wanton  
eyes

Shall women turn and writhe clad but  
with flame.

At the four corners statues will arise,—  
Four huge, black prophets built of hol-  
low stone,

And full of living men,—Colossuses,  
Whose hideous bellowing will be heard  
around.

The shuddering fire will lick their open  
mouths,

And at the end naught but these giants  
stand.

Your people, haggard, horror-stricken,  
see

You and your kingdoms vanish in the  
smoke

That wraps up these four phantoms;  
for all light

Comes from the hateful Quemadero.  
Sire,

You disappear when you're surrounded  
by

The shadow of the executioner.

*[THE KING sits down on a folding-stool,  
overwhelmed.]*

THE KING.

All this is for the Church's gain.

## THE MARQUIS.

And for  
The kingdom's loss. Castile with  
chapel houses  
Is covered. Far and near rise cries of  
fright.

[*Drawing near to THE KING.*]

Alas! you struggle vainly. You are  
caught.  
Above your Spain is stretched a sombre  
web,  
Through which you may see God, like  
some vague star;  
A gloomy net, that Satan fixed to earth  
And spun out, thread by thread, from  
Jehovah's bowels;  
A snare in which the wretched human  
mind  
Is spent and broken; an immense rose-  
window,  
Belonging to an infinite church, through  
which  
The light of hell on the high altar  
gleams.  
There shudder horror, night and deadly  
fear;  
And earth regards with woful eyes  
that thing  
Which it has ever o'er it in the dark.  
It dreams of that old Baal in whose  
clasp  
It erstwhile stifled. To grow great is  
wrong;  
To think, a grievous sin; to live is  
boldness.  
Existence is a peril. At the centre  
Of that dark web is seen the priest,  
that spider,  
And always, close by him, that fly, the  
King.

[*THE KING bends his head. THE MAR-  
QUIS watches him, and continues.*]

Faith, it is strange and terrible as well  
That out of that vile yarn, vows,  
cloister, rule,  
And dogma, there should spring a web  
so vast  
That it could snare an eagle; but 'tis  
done.  
The eagle's caught, and at the present  
hour

Gives but one little tremble of his wing  
Within the net. Before you threaten-  
ing stand  
The missal, Bible, gospel; and for you  
To will is an impossibility,  
To love you dare not; you dare reign  
no longer.  
The kings of old, hard as the mountain  
rock,  
And long-haired as the woods, had  
prouder thoughts.  
Ah, well; the present is, more than the  
past,  
But dust. A maiden's beauty wins a  
king.  
This gentle sovereign crawls along, nor  
tries  
A single royal roar. There is no more  
Aught great upon the earth except the  
priest;  
And he, this monk—oh, why do children  
dare  
Come into life!—this monk is King.  
He has  
Beneath his sandals you! He drives  
the bolts  
Upon the human soul. He's greater far  
Than bishop or than abbess in the eyes  
Of deacon or of nun. He comes; the  
law  
Bows down before him. Lowly, like  
a reed,  
The sceptre bends. The sword is ter-  
rified.  
His fixed eyes a boundless stupor  
spread.  
Man is his target, empire is his goal,  
And this dark spy of God, who throws  
o'er all  
His terrible shadow, ambushes the  
world.

[*Looking THE KING in the face.*]

A time will come when history shall  
say:  
"It was the age of fire. It was the time  
Of slavery and darkness. Its great  
work?—  
'Twas ashes; and a fork to stir the  
embers  
Replaced the sceptre once Pelagio held.  
The name borne by the monarch?  
Torquemada."

THE KING [*rising.*]

Thou liest, Marquis, in thy throat. His name  
Was Ferdinand, and neither monk nor Pope  
Shall bring to pass that it be otherwise,  
Or that I be not King,—I, who am both  
The tiger and the lion! and I'll prove  
My kingly state by cutting off some heads.

Go, get me men, and see they have their swords;

Then straightway to the Assumption Convent march,  
And seize the Infanta. Smite all who resist;

'Tis my good pleasure. Let all bend the knee,

And be reduced to utter nothingness,  
As much before you as if on a sudden  
They had beheld my face! And now the order.

[*He approaches the table, takes a pen and sheet of parchment, and writes rapidly.*]

"Submit, it is the law. Whatever act  
The Marquis does, it is willed by the King."

[*He signs and hands the parchment to THE MARQUIS*]

And if there be resistance, smite, destroy,

Burn, crush, exterminate, and leave no man

Alive, or standing wall when you have quit

The cursed spot on which that convent stood.

[*GUCHO is listening with more attention than ever.*]

THE MARQUIS.

And if some monk should—

THE KING.

Death!

THE MARQUIS.

Or trooper?

THE KING.

Chains!

A hundred cut-throats of my African guard

Take with you. You'll find they're enough to force

The barriers of one convent.

THE MARQUIS [*aside.*]

And of two.

[*Aloud.*]

Although it has the sanction of the King,

This stroke is hazardous, my gracious liege.

THE KING.

Ah! the monks are strong,

The priests are great! Ah! Torquemada reigns!

Well, we shall see.

[*The voice of an usher, outside announcing:*]

The Queen, our sovereign Lady.

[*Enter THE QUEEN, all in jet-black, with the royal crown on her head. She makes a profound reverence to THE KING, who returns it, without taking off his cap. THE QUEEN proceeds to one of the arm-chairs at the extremity of the table and sits down; then remains motionless, as if she neither saw nor heard anything. THE KING and THE QUEEN have each a rosary at the girdle.*]

THE KING [*in a low voice to THE MARQUIS*].

Make haste; for speed is vital to success.

Go, Marquis, do what I have bid thee do.

[*Enter THE DUKE OF ALAVA. He proceeds towards THE KING.*]

What is it, Duke?

THE DUKE [*after saluting THE KING and QUEEN*].

The deputies, my liege,  
Sent by the Jews you banish from your  
realm,  
Sue for the favour, gracious King and  
Queen,  
Of lying prostrate at your Highness' feet.

THE KING.

'Tis granted. Let them enter.

[THE DUKE leaves.]

[*In a low voice to THE MARQUIS*].

Run at once  
To the Assumption Convent, and lay  
hold  
Of the Infanta.

THE MARQUIS [*aside*].

Then to San Antonio.

THE KING.

Away!

THE MARQUIS.

But—

THE KING.

What?

THE MARQUIS.

If the Inquisitor?—

THE KING.

That monk indeed! He is the earth-  
worm, and  
The dragon I.

### SCENE III.

The KING, The QUEEN, The JEWS.

*Through the door at the back,  
wide open, come a frightened and  
ragged crowd between two rows*

*of halberds and pikes. They are the  
deputies of the Jews, men, women and  
children, all covered with ashes and  
in tattered clothes, barefooted, with  
ropes about their necks. Some, mutilated and enfeebled by torture, drag  
themselves along on crutches or  
stumps; others, deprived of their eyes,  
are led by children. At their head is  
the Grand Rabbi, MOSES-BEN-HABIB.  
All have the yellow badge prescribed  
for their race on their torn apparel.  
At some distance from the table THE  
RABBI stops and falls on his knees.  
All behind him prostrate themselves.  
The old men strike the floor with their  
foreheads. Neither THE KING nor  
THE QUEEN looks at them. They  
seem to be gazing at vacancy, above  
all these heads.*

THE RABBI [*on his knees*].

Your Highness of Castile,  
Of Aragon, our sovereign King and  
Queen!  
Your trembling subjects are in sore  
distress,  
And, praying first to God, we come to  
you,  
With naked feet and rope about our  
necks,  
And bring our groans and tears to you,  
O King!  
For we are lying in death's very  
shadow,  
A number of us are about to be  
Flung on the fagots, and for all the rest,  
Old men and women, exile is decreed.  
Your edicts, King and Queen, o'erwhelm  
us all.  
We weep, our fathers shudder in their  
graves,—  
You cause the mournful sepulchres to  
tremble.  
Be merciful. Our hearts are meek and  
true.  
Shut up within our little homes, we live  
Alone and humble. All our laws are  
plain,—  
So very simple that a little child  
Might set them down in writing. Never  
Jew  
Is seen to sing or laugh. We pay the  
tribute;



We never ask how large the sum  
may be.

We're trod upon while lying on the  
ground;

We're like the garment of a murdered  
man.

To God be glory! But must Israel  
Defenceless, driving ox and ass and dog  
Before him, flee, dispersed in every  
sense,

With new-born suckling babes and chil-  
dren weaned!

Must we ne'er be a people, wanderers  
ever!

O King and Queen, do not let us be  
chased

With goad of pike, and God for you  
shall open

Celestial gates. Have mercy on us. We  
Are dashed to earth. Shall we no longer  
see

Our trees and fields of corn? Shall  
mothers have

No longer milk within their breasts?  
The beasts

Are in the forests, happy with their  
mates;

The nests sleep calmly, couched beneath  
the leaves;

The hind brings up her little ones in  
peace.

Ah! let us also live within our caves,  
Beneath our squalid roofs. For there  
we dwell

Almost like slaves within a convict pen,  
But near our fathers' graves. In mercy  
deign

To suffer us to rest beneath your feet  
Which we have bathed with tears!

Alas! the woe

Of wandering along the distant ways!

Then let us drink the waters of our  
streams,

And live upon our fields, and pros-  
perous days.

Shall wait upon your steps. Alas! we  
wring

Our hands in desperation. Spare us,  
King,

The agony of exile, and the dole

Of stern, eternal, endless loneliness!

Grant us our country, grant our native  
skies!

The bread we eat with tears is bitter  
bread.

Be not the wind, though we be but the  
dust.

[*Pointing to the gold on the table.*]

Behold our ransom. Deign to take it,  
King,

And, oh! protect us. Look on our  
despair.

Be angels o'er us, but not angels dark,  
But angels good and mild. The shadow  
cast

By gloomy wings is not the same, O  
King,

As that the white wing leaves. Recall  
your ban.

We beg it in the name of those great  
Kings,

Your sacred ancestors, the lion-hearted,  
And by the tombs of sovereigns august,  
Who shone serene in wisdom's light.

We place

Our hearts, O rulers of the human race,  
Our prayers, our sorrows in the little  
hands

Of Joan, the Infanta, innocent

And like unto the wildwood strawberry

Where lights the bee. O King, O Queen,  
have mercy!

[*A moment of silence. Absolute im-  
passiveness of THE KING and  
QUEEN. Neither turns the eye.  
THE DUKE OF ALAVA, who is stand-  
ing before the table with naked  
sword, touches the shoulder of THE  
GRAND RABBI with the flat. THE  
GRAND RABBI rises, and, with the  
other Jews, retires backward with  
head bent down. The guards  
form a line and force them back.  
The door remains open after they  
have gone. THE KING beckons to  
THE DUKE OF ALAVA, who ap-  
proaches.*]

THE KING [*to the DUKE*].

The Queen and I would privately discuss  
The edict. Duke, arrest whoever comes,  
Although he be a prince. Whoever dares  
To enter here shall surely lose his head.  
Go, close the door, and guard the pas-  
sage well.



[THE DUKE lowers his sword, bows, raises his sword again, and goes. The two leaves of the door shut. THE KING and QUEEN are alone. During this scene GUCHO has disappeared under the tapestry that covers the table, where he is concealed.]

## SCENE IV.

THE KING, THE QUEEN, GUCHO under the table. THE KING and QUEEN regard each other earnestly and silently for a time. At last THE QUEEN lowers her eyes and looks at the money on the table.

THE QUEEN.

A sum of thirty thousand marks of gold.

THE KING.

A sum of thirty thousand marks of gold.

THE QUEEN.

But they are an accursed race, and all Star-gazers.

THE KING.

Thirty thousand marks of gold  
Make up six hundred thousand piasters,  
And that is twenty million sequins.

THE QUEEN.

Sequins?

THE KING.

Yes, sequins, which, to Moorish besants changed,  
Would make enough to load a galley,  
Queen!

THE QUEEN.

But still a Jew becomes invisible  
By lighting fingers of a buried child.

THE KING.

'Tis true, no doubt.

THE QUEEN.

They would a vessel load?

THE KING.

Ay, to the very deck.

THE QUEEN.

With besants?

THE KING.

Yes,  
And changed to silver dourous, we would  
have  
In weight as much again.

THE QUEEN.

My mind's confused,  
Suppose we said a pater?

[She takes her rosary. A moment of silence. THE KING touches the piles of gold and stirs them.]

THE KING [in an undertone].

With this gold  
I might without expense on Boabdil  
Make war.

THE QUEEN [all the time telling her beads.]

If I should be the first to die,  
Swear to me, sir, to take no other wife.

THE KING [in an undertone].

Yes, with this gold make war—

THE QUEEN.

Will you not swear?

THE KING.

Swear what?—Oh, yes, of course.

[Musing.]

This gold would pay  
For all expenses, all. Granada would  
Be ours, a jewel in our diadem.

THE QUEEN, [*having finished her prayers, places the rosary on the table.*]

THE QUEEN.

Sir, let us take the gold, and, all the same,  
Exile the Jews, whom I cannot accept  
As subjects.

[THE KING raises his head. THE QUEEN speaks more strongly.]

Then let us exile the Jews  
And keep their money.

THE KING.

I was thinking of it.  
But such a deed might well discourage  
others  
From acting like the Jews.

THE QUEEN [*looking at the money*].

With all this gold!  
And in your hands—

THE KING.

In yours.

THE QUEEN.

Might more be asked?

THE KING.

Well, later on.

[*He handles the piles of gold.*]

Granada I could wrest  
From the vile bastard crescent. Though  
we kept  
The Jews, yet still we might expel the  
Moors.

THE QUEEN [*wavering*].

'Tis true.

THE KING.

A compensation.

THE QUEEN.

Yes, a choice  
Between Gomorrahs.

THE KING.

Then do we accept  
The money?

THE QUEEN.

Yes.

[*He takes a pen and writes some lines on a parchment, after consulting THE QUEEN by a look.*]

THE KING.

Well, then. "The edict is  
Annulled which banishes that miscreant  
tribe,  
The Jews, and parts them from the  
Spanish people;  
It is forbid to light the stake prepared;  
'Tis ordered that imprisoned Jews be  
freed."

[THE KING signs, then hands the pen  
and parchment to THE QUEEN].

THE QUEEN [*taking the pen*].

'Tis settled.

[*Just as THE QUEEN is about to sign, the great door opens with much noise. THE KING and QUEEN turn around in amazement. GUCHO thrusts out his head. TORQUEMADA appears on the threshold in his Dominican robe and with an iron crucifix in his hand.*]

## SCENE V.

THE KING, THE QUEEN, TORQUEMADA.

TORQUEMADA looks neither at THE KING nor THE QUEEN. He has his eyes fixed on the crucifix.

TORQUEMADA.

Once for thirty silver pieces  
Did Judas sell thee; now this King and  
Queen  
Sell thee for thirty thousand golden  
crowns.

THE QUEEN.

O Heaven!

TORQUEMADA [*casting the crucifix on the pile of gold.*]

Advance, and seize him, Jews!

THE QUEEN.

Good father!

TORQUEMADA.

Rejoice, ye Jews! this King and Queen,  
as it  
Is writ, deliver to you Jesus Christ.

THE QUEEN.

My father!

TORQUEMADA [*looking them both in the face.*]

King, be thou accursed! be thou  
Accursed, O Queen!

THE QUEEN.

Forgiveness!

TORQUEMADA [*stretching his arm above them.*]

On your knees!

[THE QUEEN falls on her knees; THE KING hesitates, trembling.]

Both!

[THE KING falls on his knees.]

[*Pointing to ISABEL.*]

On this side, the Queen.

[*Pointing to FERDINAND.*]

On that, the King.

A pile of gold between. Ah! you are  
king,

And you are queen!

[*He seizes the crucifix, and raises it high above his head.*]

And this is God. Behold!  
I have surprised you in the very act,  
Red-handed. Kiss the ground.

[THE QUEEN prostrating herself.]

Forgive us, father!

TORQUEMADA.

Oh, horror!

THE QUEEN.

Give us absolution, father!

TORQUEMADA.

Measureless insolence!—It is thy reign,  
O Antichrist, at last! The Jews  
restored!

The auto-da-fe proscribed! The helpful  
stake

To be no longer lit! These sovereigns  
Forbid it. So, that wretch, the sceptre,  
dares

To touch the cross! The prince, that  
bandit, dares

To close his ears to all that Christ  
hath said!

The time has come when ye must be  
forewarned.

The Holy Office has its rights o'er you.  
The Pope alone's exempt from its  
decrees,

But kings are not. Our banner has the  
right

To go into your palaces, proud Kings!

At every hour, e'en while you sleep  
or eat,

And with it bring its melancholy doom!

Kings, those false gods, have ever been  
the aim

At which the thunderbolts of Heaven  
are hurled,

For Heaven hates kings. O princes, all  
your laws

Are vain and worthless. Ours alone  
are true:

We are the wheat, and you the tares.  
Some day

The reaper's scythe shall cut enormous swaths!

Kings, we endure you, but denounce your crimes.

Each day into the gulf we cast your names

Where dark and lonely pangs await your advent!

The floors of hell are paved with skulls of kings.

Ah, yes! because your ports are filled with sails,

Because your soldiers throng your camps, you think

That you are strong. God with quiescent eye

Amid the stars is meditating. Tremble.

THE QUEEN.

Forgive!

THE KING [*rising*].

My lord inquisitor, the King

And Queen, with contrite heart, and as a sign

Of their devotion to the faith, intend Repairing wrongs they were about to do.

The Jews shall be expelled; and we, besides,

Empower you, father, and the Holy Office,

And all your holy priests to light at once

The stake.

TORQUEMADA.

And do you think I waited?

[*He descends the three steps, goes to the gallery at the back, and violently draws the curtain aside.*]

Look!

[*Night is beginning to fall. Through the wide, open lattice at the back of the gallery, the square of La Tablada is seen covered with an immense crowd. In the centre of the square is the Quemadero. An enormous piece of masonry all bristling with flames, filled with stakes and posts, and with those*

*condemned in sanbenitos, who are seen through the smoke. Barrels of lighted pitch are nailed to the tops of the posts, and empty in flames on the heads of the condemned. Women, whom the fire has rendered naked, are burning, fastened to piles. Cries are heard. At the four corners of the Quemadero are four gigantic statues, called the four Evangelists, reddened by the blaze. They have holes and openings through which are seen men howling and arms writhing like living brands. The whole has a terrific aspect of torture and conflagration. THE KING and THE QUEEN look on, appalled. GUCHO, under the table, stretches his neck and tries to see. TORQUEMADA in meditation, sates his eyes with the Quemadero.*]

TORQUEMADA.

O festival of glory and of joy!

O grand and terrible clemency of flames!

Deliverance forever! O ye damned!

Ye are absolved! The stake on earth hath quenched

The hell below. O blessed stake, by which

The soul mounts up! Thou honourest the fire,

The shame of hell. O outlet bordering on

The radiant pathway, gate of paradise, Once more reopened for the human race!

O ardent pity with thy numberless Caresses, mystic ransom of hell's slaves. Auto-da-fe! thou'rt pardon, kindness, light,

And fire and life! a dazzling splendour on

The face of God! Oh, what a grand demise!

What souls are saved! Jews, sinners, infidels,—

Ah, my dear children, one brief, sudden pang

Rewards you with eternal happiness;

Man is no more accursed, no more exiled.

Salvation opens in the depths of heaven.  
Love wakes, and yonder is his wondrous triumph!  
What ecstasy! to enter heaven at once!  
Not languish by the way!

[*Cries heard from the stakes.*]

Hear ye the howls  
Of Satan as he sees them all escape?  
Let the eternal felon weep and wail  
In his eternal den. With these two hands  
I've pushed his huge red door. Oh,  
how he gnashed,  
When on him I made fast those hideous leaves,  
Forever, Never! And the Wicked One  
Remains behind the sombre wall.

[*He looks up to the sky.*]

Oh, I  
Have healed the grisly wound his shadow made.  
Ah! paradise was maimed; and in the side  
Of heaven was that ulcer, burning hell,  
Ensanguined hell; o'er hell I've placed the flame,  
The healing flame, and as mine eyes behold  
The boundless sky, I see the cicatrice  
It was the spear-thrust in thy side, O Christ!  
Hosanna! the eternal wound is cured.

[*He looks at the Quemadero.*]

Ye rubies of the flame! Ye precious stones  
Of fiery coals! Blaze up, ye brands!  
burn, embers!  
O sovran fire, beam brightly! shine, O stake!  
Thou casket of bright sparks soon to be stars!  
The soul, freed from the body's vesture,  
flies,  
And from the bath of torments bliss comes forth!  
O splendour! fierce magnificence of flame!

Ha! Satan, my black foe, what sayest thou?

[*In an ecstasy.*]

O fire, thou wastest all foul stains away!  
Supreme transfiguration! act of faith!  
We are two fork-bearers, the Fiend and I,  
Two masters of the flames. I succour souls,  
And he is man's destroyer. We are both  
Two executioners, and by like means  
We make—one, heaven, and the other, hell;  
He makes the evil, and I make the good;  
He's in the sewer, in the temple I;  
And the black, quivering shadow views us both.

[*He turns again to the condemned.*]

O dear, beloved brethren! but for me  
You all were lost. You now are cleansed from sin  
In that piscina by its writhing flames.  
Ah! for the passing moment you will curse me;  
But ah! dear children! you will give me thanks  
When you behold from what you have escaped;  
Because, like Michael the archangel, I  
Have also slain; because white seraphim,  
Who stoop above the pit of sulphur, mock  
The marvelous miscarriage of the gulf;  
Because your howls of hatred in the light  
Shall stammer, and, in stupefaction, end  
In songs of love! Alas! what pangs were mine  
To see you in the torture chambers lie,  
With wails and tears and shrieks and writhing limbs!  
To see you by the vice and pincers torn!  
But now you're free! Depart! ascend to heaven!  
Pass into paradise!  
[*He stoops and seems to be looking at something beneath the earth.*]  
No, thou shalt have  
No longer souls!

[*He stands erect.*]

The Lord hath given us  
The help we asked, and man's freed  
from the gulf.

Depart! away! across the burning  
gloom

And through the great winged flames,  
the whirling smoke

Bears to the skies the living spirit saved  
From the dead flesh! and all old human  
crimes

Are torn up by the roots. One had his  
sins,

Another had his errors, fault or vice;  
Each soul had in itself a monster who  
Would nibble at its light and champ  
its wings.

The angel faded fast, the demon's prey.  
Now all is burned, and by the light of  
tombs,

And in the presence of our Saviour  
Christ,

The radiant and august division's made.

Fall into dust, ye dragons! Take your  
flight,

Ye doves! For you whom hell had in  
its grip

'Tis liberty! From darkness mount to  
light!

For time take in exchange eternity!

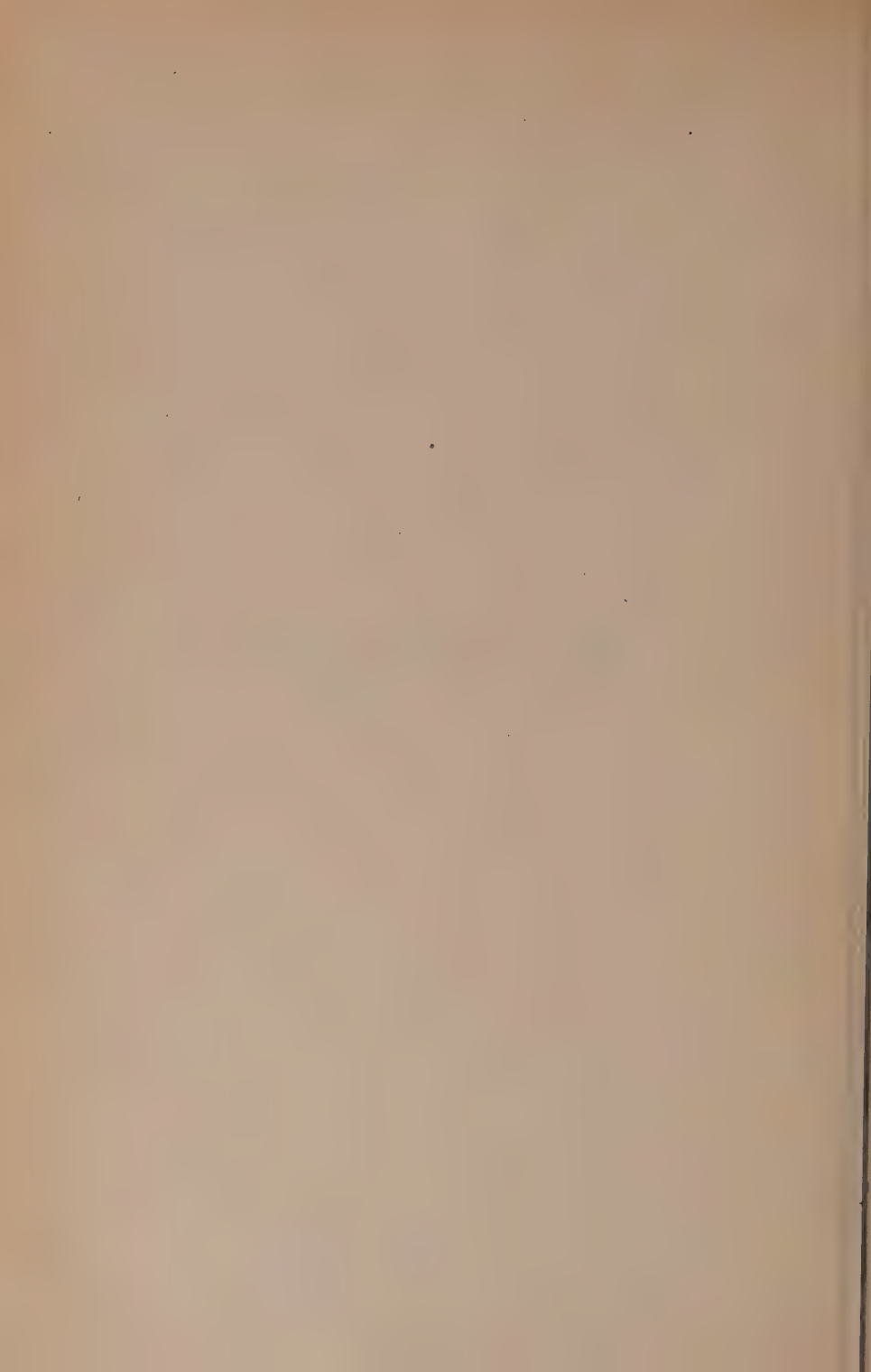
VICTOR HUGO  
(1802-1885.)





# THE SPANISH GYPSY

[SELECTIONS FROM BOOK II]



## THE SPANISH GYPSY

[*Selections from Book II.*]

[*DON SILVA, a Spanish Duke; SEPHARDO, a Jew.*]

DON SILVA.

Yes, they are warriors, too—  
Your animals. Your judgment limps,  
Sephardo:  
Death is the king of this world; 'tis his  
park  
Where he breeds life to feed him. Cries  
of pain  
Are music for his banquet; and the  
masque—  
The last grand masque for his diver-  
sion, is  
The Holy Inquisition.

SEPHARDO.

Ay, anon  
I may chime in with you. But not the  
less  
My judgment has firm feet. Though  
death were king,  
And cruelty his right-hand minister,  
Pity insurgent in some human breasts  
Makes spiritual empire, reigns supreme  
As persecuted faith in faithful hearts.  
Your small physician, weighing ninety  
pounds,  
A petty morsel for a healthy shark,  
Will worship mercy throned within his  
soul  
Though all the luminous angels of the  
stars  
Burst into cruel chorus on his ear,  
Singing, "We know no mercy," He  
would cry  
"I know it" still, and soothe the fright-  
ened bird  
And feed the child a-hungred, walk  
abreast  
Of persecuted men, and keep most hate

For rational torturers. There I stand  
firm.  
But you are bitter, and my speech rolls  
on  
Out of your note.

DON SILVA.

No, no, I follow you.  
I, too, have that within which I will  
worship  
In spite of . . . Yes, SepharDO, I  
am bitter.  
I need your counsel, foresight, all your  
aid.  
Lay these small guests to bed, then we  
will talk.

SEPHARDO.

See, they are sleeping now. The boy  
has made  
My leg his pillow. For my brother  
sage,  
He'll never heed us; he knit long ago  
A sound ape-system, wherein men are  
brutes  
Emitting doubtful noises. Pray, my  
lord,  
Unlade what burthens you: my ear and  
hand  
Are servants of a heart much bound to  
you.

DON SILVA.

Yes, yours is love that roots in gifts  
bestowed  
By you on others, and will thrive the  
more  
The more it gives. I have a double  
want:  
First a confessor—not a Catholic;  
A heart without a livery—naked inan-  
hood.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, I will be frank; there's no  
such thing  
As naked manhood. If the stars look  
down  
On any mortal of our shape, whose  
strength  
Is to judge all things without prefer-  
ence,  
He is a monster, not a faithful man.  
While my heart beats it shall wear  
livery—  
My people's livery, whose yellow badge  
Marks them for Christian scorn. I will  
not say  
Man is first man to me, then Jew or  
Gentile:  
That suits the rich *marranos*; but to me  
My father is first father and then man.  
So much for frankness' sake. But let  
that pass.  
'Tis true at least, I am no Catholic  
But Salomo SepharDO, a born Jew,  
Willing to serve Don Silva.

DON SILVA.

Oft you sing  
Another strain, and melt distinctions  
down  
As no more real than the wall of dark  
Seen by small fishes' eyes, that pierce  
a span  
In the wide ocean. Now you league  
yourself  
To hem me, hold me prisoner in bonds  
Made, say you—how?—by God or Dem-  
iurge,  
By spirit or flesh—I care not! Love  
was made  
Stronger than bonds, and where they  
press must break them.  
I came to you that I might breathe  
at large,  
And now you stifle me with talk of  
birth,  
Of race and livery. Yet you knew  
Fedalma.  
She was your friend, SepharDO. And  
you know  
She is gone from me—know the hounds  
are loosed  
To dog me if I seek her.

SEPHARDO.

Yes, I know.  
Forgive me that I used untimely speech,  
Pressing a bruise. I loved her well,  
my lord:  
A woman mixed of such fine elements  
That were all virtue and religion dead  
She'd make them newly, being what  
she was.

DON SILVA.

*Was?* say not *was*, SepharDO! She still  
lives—  
Is, and is mine; and I will not re-  
nounce  
What heaven, nay, what she gave me.  
I will sin,  
If sin I must, to win my life again.  
The fault lie with those powers who  
have embroiled  
The world in hopeless conflict, where  
all truth  
Fights manacled with falsehood, and  
all good  
Makes but one palpitating life with ill.

(DON SILVA *pauses*. SEPHARDO *is silent*.)

SepharDO, speak! am I not justified?  
You taught my mind to use the wing  
that soars  
Above the petty fences of the herd:  
Now, when I need your doctrine, you  
are dumb.

SEPHARDO.

Patience! *Hidalgos* want interpreters  
Of untold dreams and riddles; they in-  
sist  
On dateless horoscopes, on formulas  
To raise a possible spirit, nowhere  
named.  
Science must be their wishing-cap; the  
stars  
Speak plainer for high largesse. No,  
my lord!  
I cannot counsel you to unknown  
deeds.  
This much I can divine; you wish to  
find  
Her whom you love—to make a secret  
search.

DON SILVA.

That is begun already: a messenger  
Unknown to all has been dispatched  
this night.

But forecast must be used, a plan de-  
vised,

Ready for service when my scout re-  
turns,

Bringing the invisible thread to guide  
my steps

Toward that lost self my life is aching  
with.

Sephardo, I will go: and I must go  
Unseen by all save you; though, at our  
need,

We may trust Alvar.

SEPHARDO.

A grave task, my lord.

Have you a shapen purpose, or mere  
will

That sees the end alone and not the  
means?

Resolve will melt no rocks.

DON SILVA.

But it can scale them.

This fortress has two private issues:  
one,

Which served the Gypsies' flight, to  
me is closed:

Our bands must watch the outlet, now  
betrayed

To cunning enemies. Remains one  
other,

Known to no man save me: a secret  
left

As heirloom in our house: a secret  
safe

Even from him—from Father Isidor.  
'Tis he who forces me to use it—he:

All's virtue that cheats bloodhounds.  
Hear, Sepharo

Given, my scout returns and brings me  
news

I can straight act on, I shall want your  
aid.

The issue lies below this tower, your  
fastness,

Where, by my charter, you rule abso-  
lute.

I shall feign illness; you with mystic  
air

Must speak of treatment asking vig-  
ilance

(Nay I *am* ill—my life has half ebb-  
ed out).

I shall be whimsical, devolve command  
On Don Diego, speak of poisoning.

Insist on being lodged within this  
tower,

And rid myself of tendance save from  
you

And perhaps from Alvar. So I shall  
escape

Unseen by spies, shall win the days I  
need

To ransom her and have her safe en-  
shrined.

No matter, were my flight disclosed at  
last;

I shall come back as from a duel fought  
Which no man can undo. Now you  
know all.

Say, can I count on you?

SEPHARDO.

For faithfulness

In aught that I may promise, yes, my  
lord.

But—for a pledge of faithfulness—this  
warning.

I will betray naught for your personal  
harm:

I love you. But note this—I am a Jew;  
And while the Christian persecutes my  
race,

I'll turn at need even the Christian's  
trust

Into a weapon and a shield for Jews.

Shall Cruelty crowned—wielding the  
savage force

Of multitudes, and calling savageness  
God

Who gives it victory—upbraid deceit

And ask for faithfulness? I love you  
well.

You are my friend. But yet you are a  
Christian,

Whose birth has bound you to the  
Catholic kings.

There may come moments when to  
share my joy

Would make you traitor, when to share  
your grief

Would make me other than a Jew. . .



DON SILVA.

What need  
To urge that now, Sephardo? I am  
one  
Of many Spanish nobles who detest  
The roaring bigotry of the herd, would  
fain  
Dash from the lips of king and queen  
the cup  
Filled with besotting venom, half in-  
fused  
By avarice and half by priests. And  
now—  
Now when the cruelty you flout me with  
Pierces me, too, in the apple of my eye,  
Now when my kinship scorches me like  
hate  
Flashed from a mother's eye, you  
choose this time  
To talk of birth as of inherited rage  
Deep-down, volcanic, fatal, bursting  
forth  
From under hard-taught reason? Won-  
drous friend  
My uncle Isidor's echo, mocking me,  
From the opposing quarter of the  
heavens,  
With iteration of the thing I know,  
That I'm a Christian knight and Span-  
ish duke!  
The consequence? Why, that I know.  
It lies  
In my own hands and not on raven  
tongues.  
The knight and noble shall not wear  
the chain  
Of false-linked thoughts in brains of  
other men.  
What question was there 'twixt us two,  
of aught  
That makes division? When I come to  
you  
I come for other doctrine than the  
Prior's.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you are o'erwrought by pain.  
My words  
That carried innocent meaning, do but  
float  
Like little emptied cups upon the flood  
Your mind brings with it. I but an-  
swered you

With regular proviso, such as stands  
In testaments and charters, to forefend  
A possible case which none deem likeli-  
hood;

Just turned my sleeve, and pointed to  
the brand

Of brotherhood that limits every pledge.  
Superfluous nicety—the student's trick,  
Who will not drink until he can define  
What water is and is not. But enough.  
My lord to serve you now knows no  
division

Save the alternate beat of love and fear.  
There's danger in this quest—name,  
honor, life—

My lord, the stake is great, and are you  
sure. . . .

DON SILVA.

No, I am sure of naught but this,  
Sephardo,

That I will go. Prudence is but con-  
ceit

Hoodwinked by ignorance. There's  
nought exists

That is not dangerous and holds not  
death

For souls or bodies. Prudence turns  
its helm

To flee the storm and lands 'mid pesti-  
lence.

Wisdom would end by throwing dice  
with folly

But for dire passion which alone makes  
choice.

And I have chosen as the lion robbed  
Chooses to turn upon the ravisher.

If love were slack, the Prior's im-  
perious will

Would move it to outmatch him. But,  
Sephardo,

Were all else mute, all passive as sea-  
calm,

My soul is one great hunger—I must  
see her.

Now you are smiling. Oh, you merci-  
ful men

Pick up coarse griefs and fling them  
in the face

Of us whom life with long descent has  
trained

To subtler pains, mocking your ready  
balms.

You smile at my soul's hunger.

SEPHARDO.

Science smiles  
And sways our lips in spite of us, my  
lord,  
When thought weds fact—when maiden  
prophecy  
Waiting, believing, sees the bridal torch.  
I use not vulgar measures for your  
grief,  
My pity keeps no cruel feasts; but  
thought  
Has joys apart, even in blackest woe,  
And seizing some fine thread of verity  
Knows momentary godhead.

DON SILVA.

And your thought?

SEPHARDO.

Seized on the close agreement of your  
words  
With what is written in your horoscope.

DON SILVA.

Reach it me now.

SEPHARDO.

By your leave, Annibal.

. . . . .  
. . . . .

DON SILVA.

I wish, by new appliance of your skill,  
Reading afresh the records of the sky,  
You could detect more special augury.  
Such chance oft happens, for all char-  
acters  
Must shrink or widen, as our wine-  
skins do,  
For more or less that we can pour in  
them;  
And added years give ever a new key  
To fixed prediction.

SEPHARDO (*returning with the parch-  
ment and reseating himself*).

True; our growing thought  
Makes growing revelation. But demand  
not

Specific augury, as of sure success  
In meditated projects, or of ends  
To be foreknown by peeping in God's  
scroll.

I say—nay, Ptolemy said it, but wise  
books

For half the truths they hold are hon-  
ored tombs—

Prediction is contingent of effects  
Where causes and concomitants are  
mixed

To seeming wealth of possibilities  
Beyond our reckoning. Who will pre-  
tend

To tell the adventures of each single  
fish

Within the Syrian Sea? Show me a  
fish,

I'll weigh him, tell his kind, what he  
devoured,

What would have devoured *him*—but  
for one Blas

Who netted him instead; nay, could I  
tell

That had Blas missed him, he would  
have died

Of poisonous mud, and so made car-  
rion,

Swept off at last by some sea-scar-  
venger?

DON SILVA.

Ay, now you talk of fishes, you get  
hard.

I note you merciful men: you can en-  
dure

Torture of fishes and hidalgos. Fol-  
lows?

SEPHARDO.

By how much, then, the fortunes of a  
man

Are made of elements refined and  
mixed

Beyond a tunny's, what our science  
tells

Of a star's influence hath contingency  
In special issues. Thus, the loadstone

draws,  
Acts like a will to make the iron sub-  
miss;

But garlic rubbing it, that chief effect  
Lies in suspense; the iron keeps at

large,

And garlic is controller of the stone.  
 And so, my lord, your horoscope declares  
 Not absolutely of your sequent lot,  
 But, by our lore's authentic rules, sets forth  
 What gifts, what dispositions, likelihoods  
 The aspects of the heavens conspired to fuse  
 With your incorporate soul. Aught more than this  
 Is vulgar doctrine. For the ambient,  
 Though a cause regnant, is not absolute,  
 But suffers a determining restraint  
 From action of the subject qualities.  
 In proximate motion.

DON SILVA.

Yet you smiled just now  
 At some close fitting of my horoscope  
 With present fact—with this resolve of mine  
 To quit the fortress?

SEPHARDO.

Nay, not so; I smiled,  
 Observing how the temper of your soul  
 Sealed long tradition of the influence shed  
 By the heavenly spheres. Here is your horoscope:  
 The aspects of the Moon with Mars conjunct,  
 Of Venus and the Sun with Saturn, lord  
 Of the ascendant, make symbolic speech  
 Whereto your words gave running paraphrase.

DON SILVA. (*impatiently*).

What did I say?

SEPHARDO.

You spoke as oft you did  
 When I was schooling you at Cordova,  
 And lessons on the noun and verb were drowned  
 With sudden stream of general debate  
 On things and actions. Always in that stream

I saw the play of babbling currents,  
 saw  
 A nature o'er-endowed with opposites  
 Making a self alternate, where each hour  
 Was critic of the last, each mood too strong  
 For tolerance of its fellow in close yoke.  
 The ardent planets stationed as supreme,  
 Potent in action, suffer light malign  
 From luminaries large and coldly bright  
 Inspiring meditative doubt, which straight  
 Doubts of itself, by interposing act  
 Of Jupiter in the fourth house fortified  
 With power ancestral. So, my lord, I read  
 The changeless in the changing; so I read  
 The constant action of celestial powers  
 Mixed into waywardness of mortal men,  
 Whereof no sage's eye can trace the course  
 And see the close.

DON SILVA.

Fruitful result, O sage!  
 Certain uncertainty.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, a result  
 Fruitful as seeded earth, where certainty  
 Would be as barren as a globe of gold.  
 I love you, and would serve you well, my lord.  
 Your rashness vindicates itself too much,  
 Puts harness on of cobweb theory  
 While rushing like a cataract. Be warned.  
 Resolve with you is a fire-breathing steed,  
 But it sees visions, and may feel the air  
 Impassable with thoughts that come too late,  
 Rising from out the grave of murdered honor.  
 Look at your image in your horoscope:  
 (*Laying the horoscope before* DON SILVA.)

You are, so mixed, my lord, that each  
to-day  
May seem a maniac to its morrow.

DON SILVA (*pushing away the horoscope,  
rising and turning to look out at the  
open window*).

No!

No morrow e'er will say that I am mad  
Not to renounce her. Risks! I know  
them all.

I've dodged each lurking, ambushed  
consequence.

I've handled every chance to know its  
shape

As blind men handle bolts. Oh, I'm too  
sane!

I see the Prior's nets. He does my  
deed;

For he has narrowed all my life to  
this—

That I must find her by some hidden  
means.

(*He turns and stands close in front of  
SEPHARDO.*)

One word, Sephardo—leave that horo-  
scope,

Which is but iteration of myself,  
And give me promise. Shall I count  
on you

To act upon my signal? Kings of Spain  
Like me have found their refuge in a  
Jew,

And trusted in his counsel. You will  
help me?

SEPHARDO,

Yes, my lord, I will help you. Israel  
Is to the nations as the body's heart:  
Thus writes our poet Jehuda. I will act  
So that no man may ever say through  
me

"Your Israel is naught," and make my  
deeds

The mud they fling upon my brethren.  
I will not fail you, save—you know the  
terms:

I am a Jew, and not that infamous life  
That takes on bastardy, will know no  
father,

So shrouds itself in the pale abstract,  
Man.

You should be sacrificed to Israel  
If Israel need it.

DON SILVA.

I fear not that.

I am no friend of fines and banishment,  
Or flames that, fed on heretics, still  
gape,

And must have heretics made to feed  
them still.

I take your terms, and for the rest,  
your love

Will not forsake me.

SEPHARDO,

'Tis hard Roman love,

That looks away and stretches forth  
the sword

Bared for its master's breast to run  
upon,

But you will have it so. Love shall  
obey.

(*DON SILVA turns to the window again,  
and is silent for a few moments,  
looking at the sky.*)

DON SILVA.

See now, Sephardo, you would keep no  
faith

To smooth the path of cruelty. Con-  
fess,

The deed I would not do, save for the  
strait

Another brings me to (quit my com-  
mand,

Resign it for brief space, I mean no  
more)—

Were that deed branded, then the brand  
should fix

On him who urged me.

SEPHARDO,

Will it, though, my lord?

DON SILVA.

I speak not of the fact, but of the  
right.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you said but now you were resolved.  
 Question not if the world will be unjust  
 Branding your deed. If conscience has two courts  
 With differing verdicts, where shall lie the appeal?  
 Our law must be without us or within.  
 The Highest speaks through all our people's voice,  
 Custom, tradition, and old sanctities;  
 Or he reveals himself by new decrees  
 Of inward certitude.

DON SILVA.

My love for her  
 Makes highest law, must be the voice  
 of God.

SEPHARDO.

I thought, but now, you seem to make excuse,  
 And plead as in some court where Spanish knights  
 Are tried by other laws than those of love.

DON SILVA.

'Twas momentary. I shall dare it all.  
 How the great planet glows, and looks at me,  
 And seems to pierce me with his effluence!  
 Were he a living God, these rays that stir  
 In me the pulse of wonder were in him  
 Fullness of knowledge. Are you certified,  
 Sephardo, that the astral science shrinks  
 To such pale ashes, dead symbolic forms  
 For that congenital mixture of effects  
 Which life declares without the aid of lore?  
 If there are times propitious or malign  
 To our first framing, then must all events  
 Have favoring periods: you cull your plants  
 By signal of the heavens, then why not trace  
 As others would by astrologic rule

Times of good augury for momentous acts,—  
 As secret journeys?

SEPHARDO.

Oh, my lord, the stars  
 Act not as witchcraft or as muttered spells.  
 I said before they are not absolute,  
 And tell no fortunes. I adhere alone  
 To such tradition of their agencies  
 As reason fortifies.

DON SILVA.

A barren science!  
 Some argue now 'tis folly. 'Twere as well  
 Be of their mind. If those bright stars  
 had will—  
 But they are fatal fires, and know no love.  
 Of old, I think, the world was happier  
 With many gods, who held a struggling life  
 As mortals do, and helped men in the straits  
 Of forced misdoing. I doubt that horoscope.

(DON SILVA turns from the window and reseats himself opposite SEPHARDO.)

I am most self-contained, and strong to bear.  
 No man save you has seen my trembling lip  
 Utter her name, since she was lost to me.  
 I'll face the progeny of all my deeds.

SEPHARDO.

May they be fair! No horoscope makes slaves.  
 'Tis but a mirror, shows one image forth,  
 And leaves the future dark with endless "ifs."

DON SILVA.

I marvel, my Sephardo, you can pinch  
 With confident selection these few grains,



And call them verity, from out the dust  
Of crumbling error. Surely such  
thought creeps,  
With insect exploration of the world.  
Were I a Hebrew, now, I would be  
bold.  
Why should you fear, not being Cath-  
olic?

SEPHARDO.

Lo! you yourself, my lord, mix subtle-  
ties  
With gross belief; by momentary lapse  
Conceive, with all the vulgar, that we  
Jews  
Must hold ourselves God's outlaws, and  
defy  
All good with blasphemy, because we  
hold  
Your good is evil; think we must turn  
pale  
To see our portraits painted in your  
hell,  
And sin the more for knowing we are  
lost.

DON SILVA.

Read not my words with malice. I but  
meant,  
My temper hates an over-cautious  
march.

SEPHARDO.

The Unnameable made not the search  
for truth  
To suit hidalgos' temper. I abide  
By that wise spirit of listening rever-  
ence  
Which marks the boldest doctors of our  
race.  
For Truth, to us, is like a living child  
Born of two parents: if the parents  
part  
And will divide the child, how shall it  
live?  
Or, I will rather say: Two angels guide  
The path of man, both aged and yet  
young,  
As angels are, ripening through endless  
years.  
On one he leans: some call her Mem-  
ory.  
And some, Tradition; and her voice is  
sweet,

With deep mysterious accords: the  
other,  
Floating above, holds down a lamp  
which streams  
A light divine and searching on the  
earth,  
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Mem-  
ory yields,  
Yet clings with loving check, and shines  
anew  
Reflecting all the rays of that bright  
lamp  
Our angel Reason holds. We had not  
walked  
But for Tradition; we walk evermore  
To higher paths, by brightening Rea-  
son's lamp.  
Still we are purblind, tottering. I hold  
less  
Than Aben-Ezra, of that aged lore  
Brought by long centuries from Chal-  
daean plains;  
The Jew-taught Florentine rejects it  
all.  
For still the light is measured by the  
eye,  
And the weak organ fails. I may see ill:  
But over all belief is faithfulness,  
Which fulfills vision with obedience.  
So, I must grasp my morsels: truth is  
oft  
Scattered in fragments round a stately  
pile  
Built half of error; and the eye's de-  
fect  
May breed too much denial. But, my  
lord,  
I weary your sick soul. Go now with  
me  
Into the turret. We will watch the  
spheres,  
And see the constellations bend and  
plunge  
Into a depth of being where our eyes  
Hold them no more. We'll quit our-  
selves and be  
The red Aldebaran or bright Sirius,  
And sail as in a solemn voyage, bound  
On some great quest we know not.

GEORGE ELIOT  
(1819-1880).





THE MERCHANT OF VENICE  
[EXTRACT]



# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

[Extract.]

ACT I,

SCENE III.

ANTONIO.

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK.

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft  
In the Rialto you have rated me  
About my moneys and my usances:  
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;  
For sufferance is the badge of all our  
tribe.

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,  
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
And all for use of that which is mine  
own.

Well then, it now appears you need my  
help:

Go to, then; you come to me, and you  
say

'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you  
say so;

You, that did void your rheum upon my  
beard

And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
Over your threshold: moneys is your  
suit.

What should I say to you? Should I  
not say

'Hath a dog money? Is it possible  
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?'  
or

Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,  
With bated breath and whispering  
humbleness,

Say this,—

'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday  
last;

You spurn'd me such a day; another  
time

You call'd me dog; and for these cour-  
tesies

I'll lend you thus much moneys?'

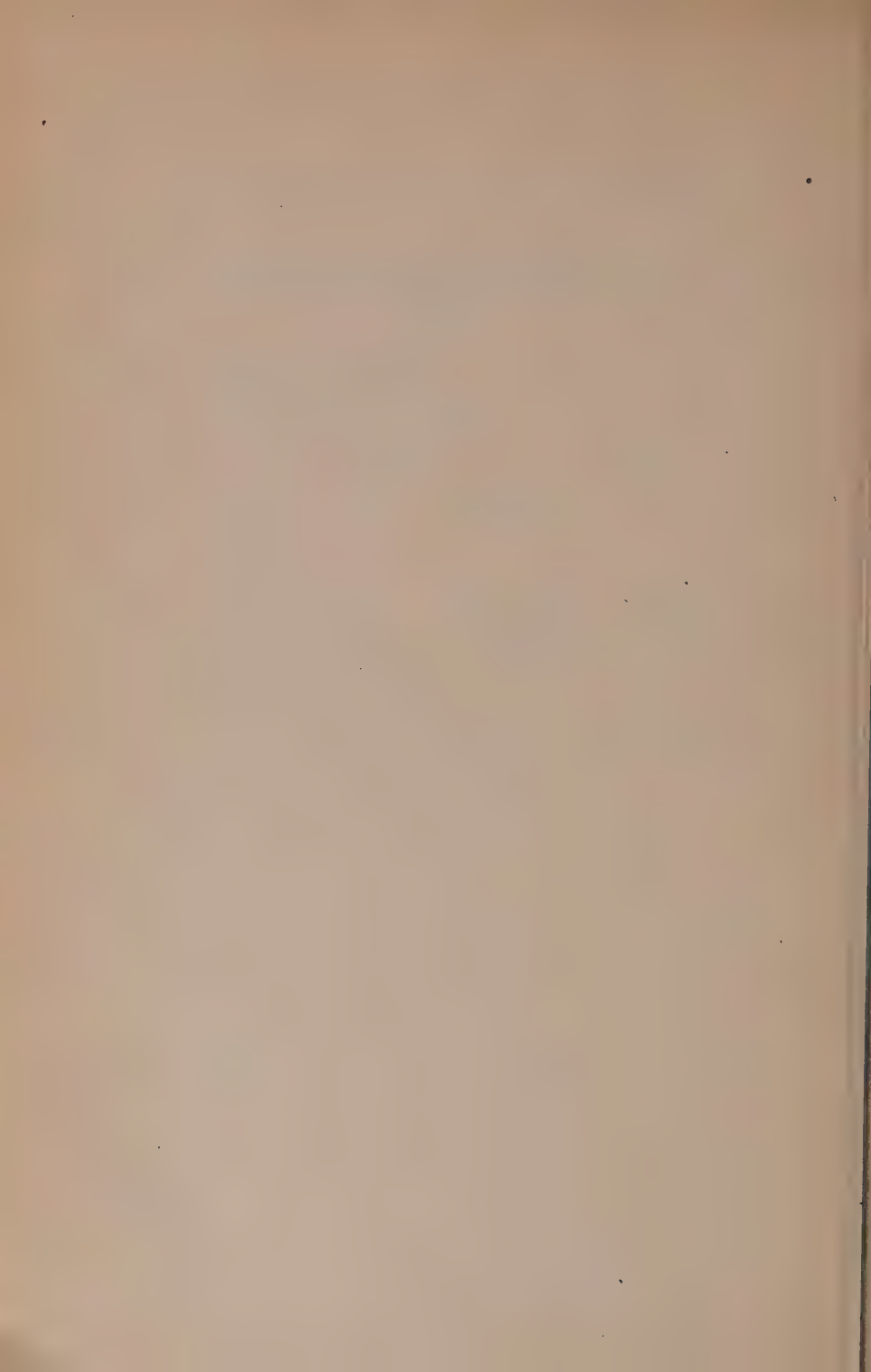
ACT III.

SCENE I.

SHYLOCK.

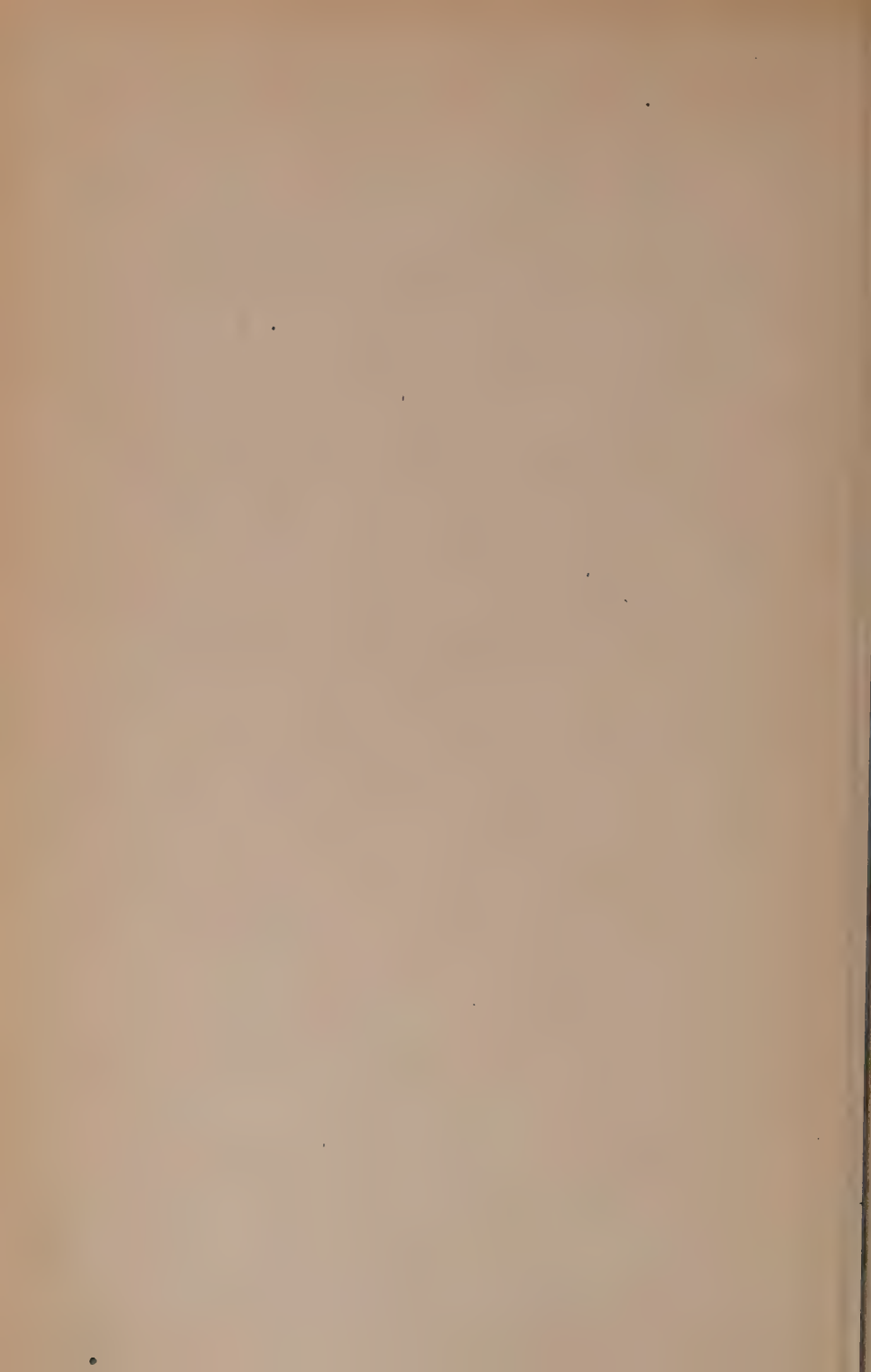
.... He hath disgraced me, and hindered  
me half a million; laughed at my losses,  
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation,  
thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends,  
heated mine enemies; and what's his  
reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew  
eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs,  
dimensions, senses, affections, passions?  
Fed with the same food, hurt with the  
same weapons, subject to the same dis-  
eases, healed by the same means, warmed  
and cooled by the same winter and sum-  
mer, as a Christian is? If you prick us,  
do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we  
not laugh? if you poison us, do we not  
die? and if you wrong us, shall we not  
revenge? If we are like you in the rest,  
we will resemble you in that. If a Jew  
wrong a Christian, what is his humility?  
Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew  
what should his sufferance be by Chris-  
tian example? Why, revenge. The vil-  
lany you teach me, I will execute; and it  
shall go hard but I will better the in-  
struction.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
(1564-1616)



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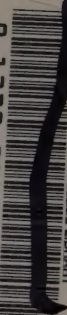


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